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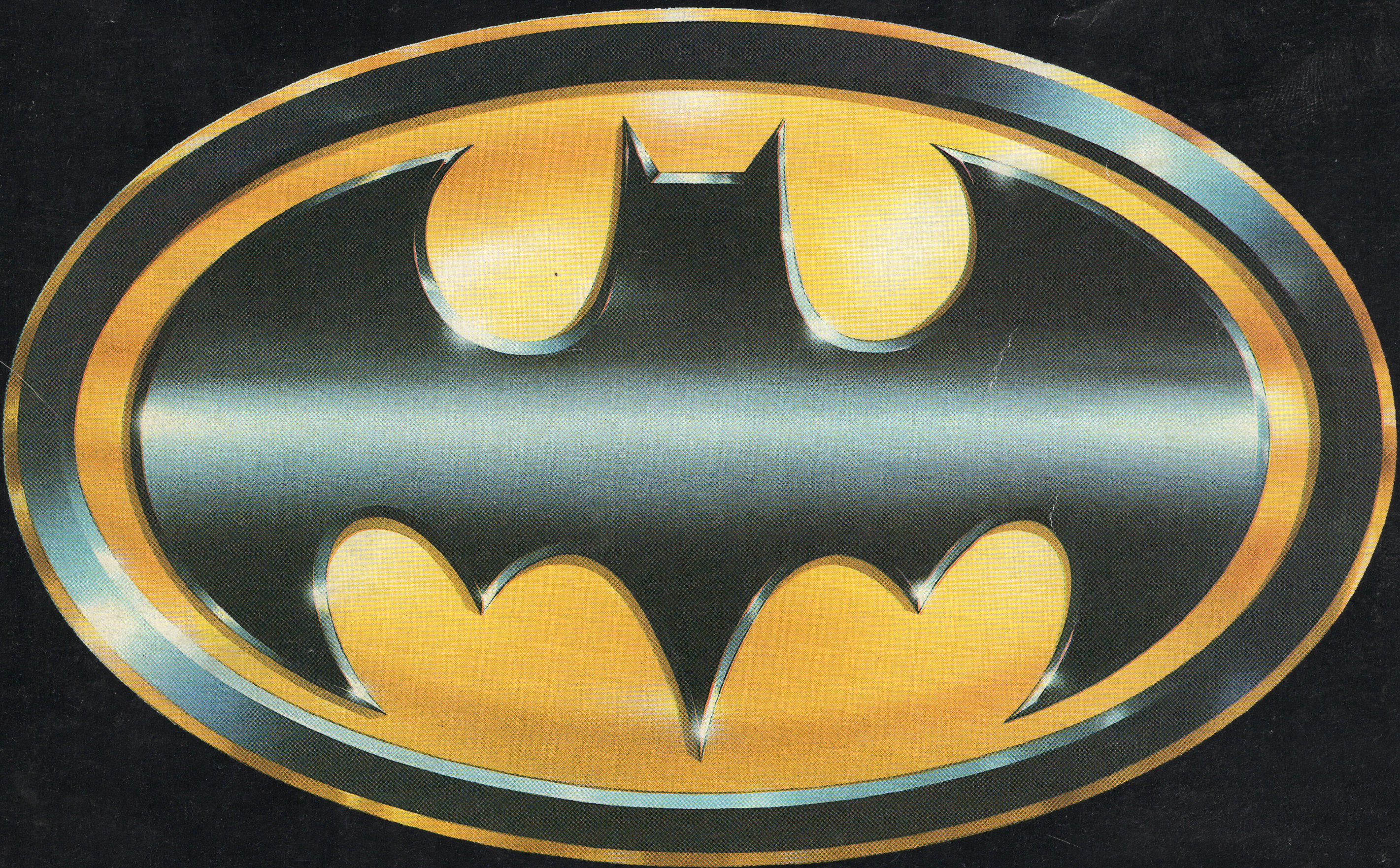

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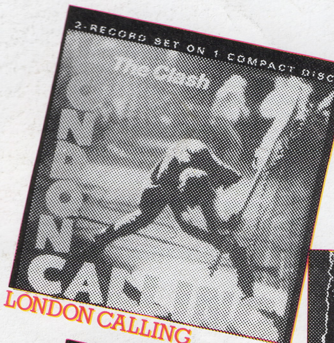
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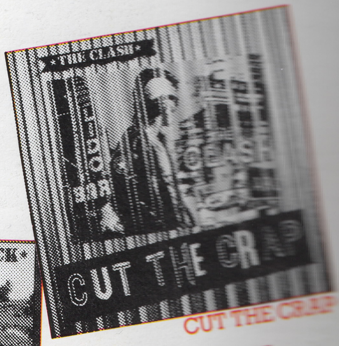
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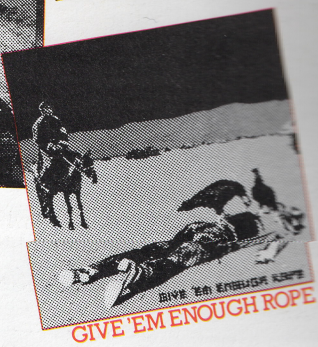
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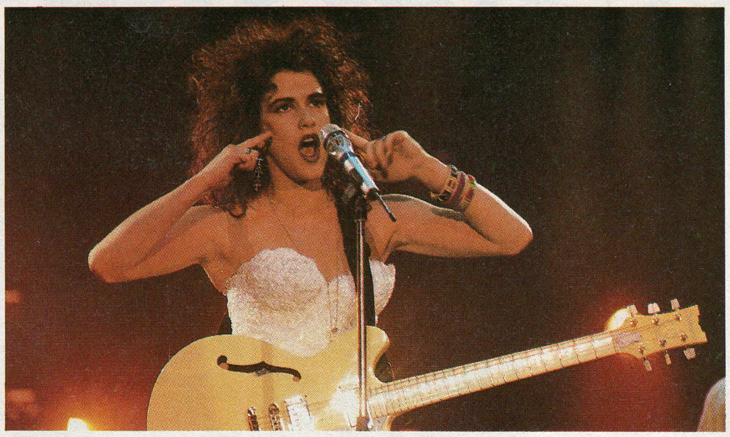
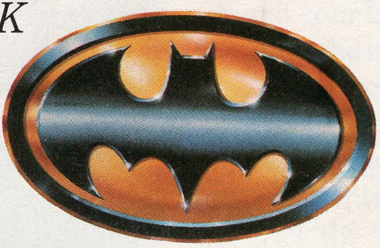


PHIL LOFTUS/LFI

Once leading Prince Revolutionaries, now bettering themselves solo and with a second album — 'Fruit At The Bottom' — out now, Wendy & Lisa hit town this week. *Nick Coleman* interviews 'em in stereo.

14 *THE BAT PACK*

At last, the full story behind the controversial and super-secretive shooting of 'Batman' which banishes forever the spectre of '60s camp. High above a freshly sinister Gotham City, *Dominic Wells* surveys the plots, sets and crazed characters of the action movie of the year.



20 *PAYING TO WIN*

Time was when sport was a game, and gentlemanly with it; now British pros have caught a severe case of *agents*. Is sport overdue a drastic reassessment on commercial and career priorities, and will it mean the top dollar *prima donna*-isms of pop and film translating to the playing field? *Geoff Brown* meets the man behind Maradona.

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The wants and needs of London's elderly seem lost in the escalating war of the fit and young for homes, health, wealth, jobs, transport, and a future. But our elders' concerns are vital, and should be ours, argues *Chris Taggart*, and their numbers are rising rapidly.

27 *THE BLACK PRINCE*

Soon to celebrate 70, and with her 24th novel due out, Iris Murdoch abandons her ivory tower for the Aldwych theatre, and the stage adaptation of her novel of art, frenzy, love and writer's block. *Mark Sanderson* dodges the classical allusions.

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Continuing our series of European city guides, *Mick Sinclair* gives the insider's Iceland and its thriving capital, no longer an unlikely destination for those in search of culture, leisure, the good life. Plus: DIY superstores — *Billy Naylor* compares and contrasts; Food: Caroline Stacey eats out in London's newest restaurants; Active: *Eva Lewicki* gets time out in women's American football.

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Free copies of 'Queen Of The Damned' — third part of Anne Rice's cult vampire novels; free film preview tickets for 'The Navigator'; cheap theatre tickets; win European Getaway weekends to Florence and Amsterdam; free Barbican Health & Fitness Centre membership vouchers.

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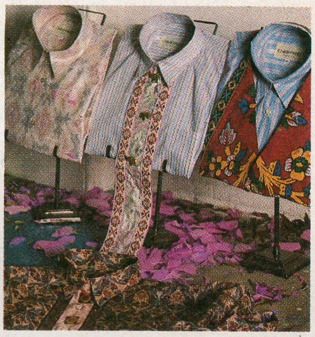

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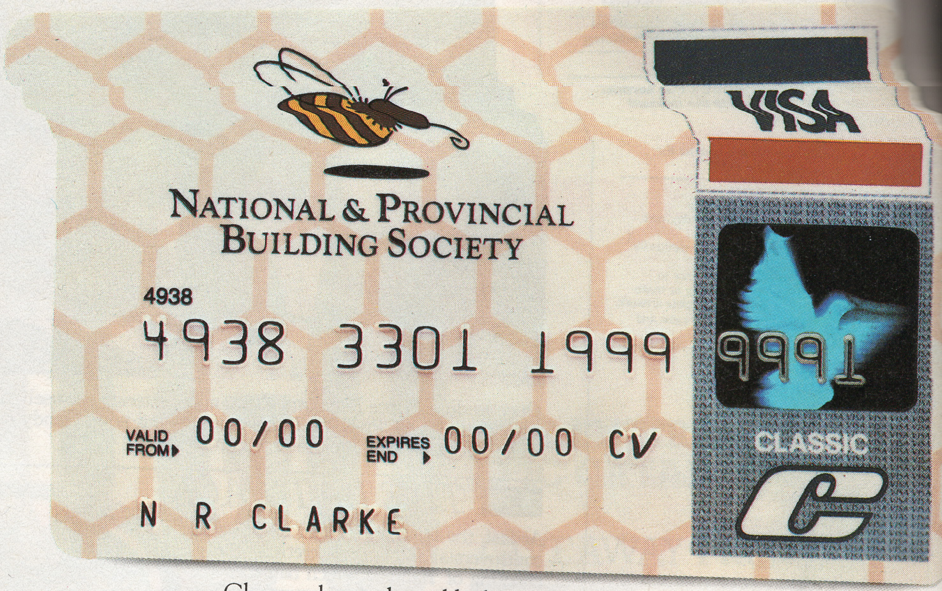
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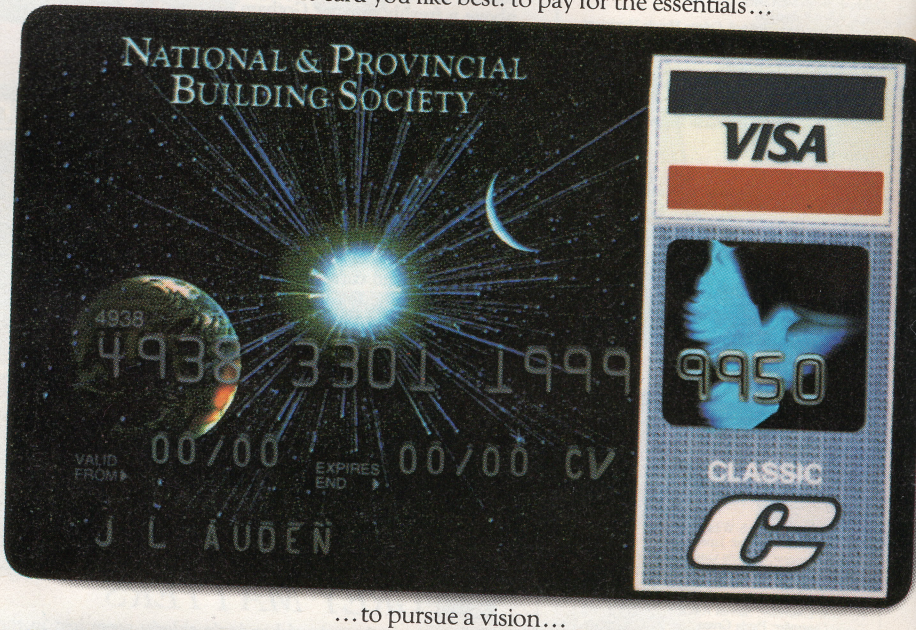
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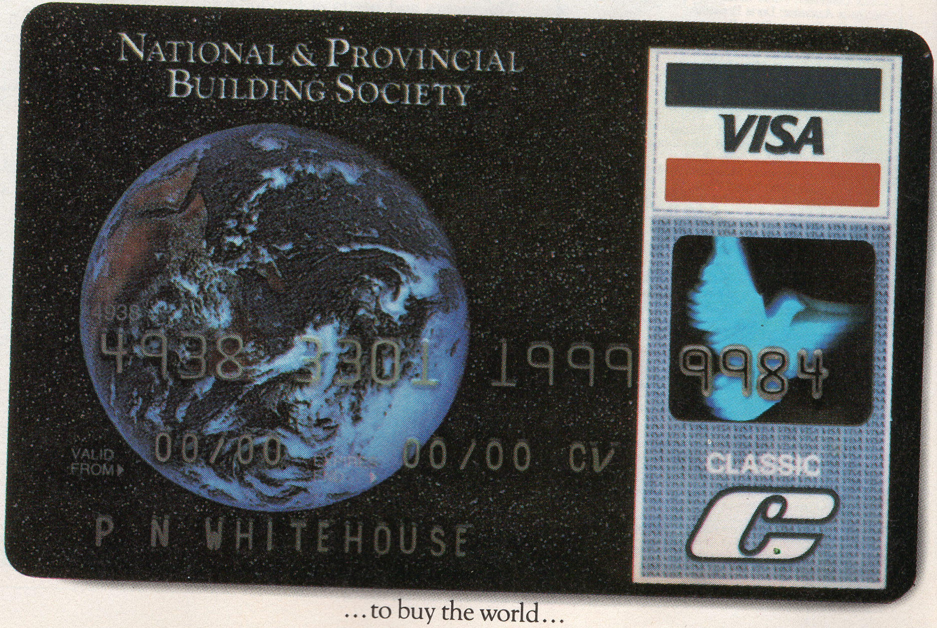
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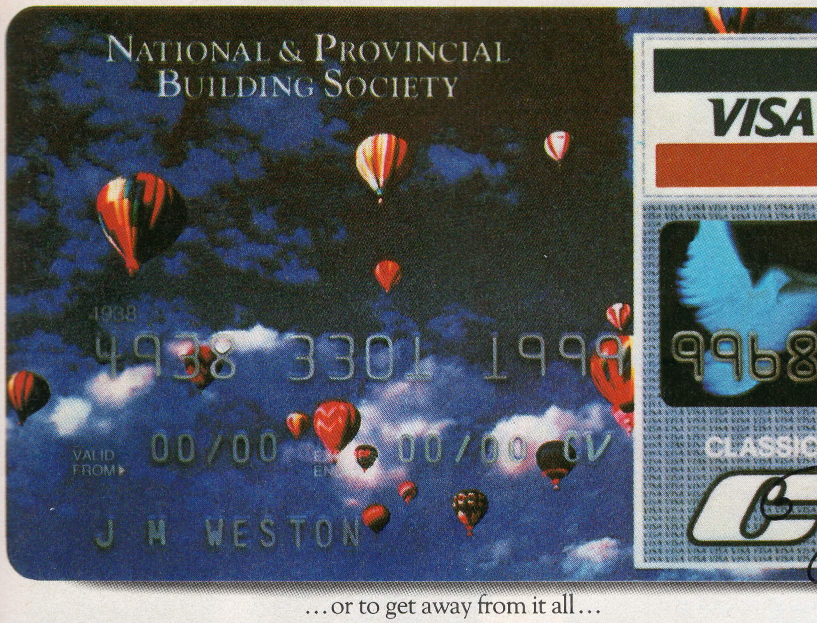
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THIS

Eight days of notables and quotables, people

Dead Or Alive

FILM

WES CRAVEN

For 49-year-old horror director Wes Craven the dream imagery and pervasive evil of 'Nightmare On Elm Street' linger on. His latest film, based upon anthropologist Wade Davis's true story of his search to find the famed Haitian zombification drug, is not however a flight of fantasy but a tale of terrors that are all too real. In 'The Serpent and the Rainbow' Craven hopes to dispel the hammed-up Hollywood image of zombies as the 'living dead' — for Craven they are rather the 'dead living'. In Haiti, unfortunate victims are subjected to Tetrodotoxin which reduces them to a state of apparent death. Declared dead and issued with a certificate, they are buried alive; then, unearthed before suffocation, they are beaten, informed that their soul has been taken, given the hallucinogen Datura, and sent into the cane fields, a zombie.

Wes Craven filmed 'The Serpent and the Rainbow' on location in Haiti, a grim experience for all concerned. Among the more bizarre scenes captured on celluloid are Haitians eating glass and cinders, and piercing their flesh with six-inch needles — all done for real. Some of the many extras employed were only too willing to demonstrate their ability to self-combust, and one genuine voodoo poisoner, employed to blow fake poison into Bill Pullman's face, thought he was being paid to do the real job. 'He was completely ready to poison Bill for ten dollars a day,' says Craven, who at one point was faced with 4,000 extras armed with stones and prepared to use them to get their wages doubled.

Craven claims to have met at least one 'zombie', although he wishes there was some other word he could use: 'It's so hard not to have a smile on your face. It was a 17-year-old girl I met in a clinic outside Port au Prince where a doctor was trying to rehabilitate zombies.' She had been found wandering in a cane field scaring the living with her dazed and death-like appearance. Craven has vivid memories of her arthritic movements, nervous twitches and the way her eyes shuddered as if a voltage had gone through her body.

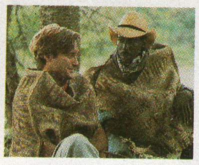
Perhaps the most curious example of the power voodoo exerts over the mind was the experiences of the film's writer, Richard Maxwell. In Haiti for rewrites, he was shortly suffering what in medical circles would be called a nervous breakdown. In Haiti, however, he was merely paying a high price for his curiosity.

During an interview with a boukur, the writer had mentioned in passing how he would love to be initiated into voodoo. 'The next day,' says Craven, 'he completely lost the ability to concentrate and write. After three days I noticed Richard stopped shaving, then he stopped coming out of his room. Then he descended, to put it bluntly, into complete madness. He became paranoid, delusional and non-functional.' Back in Los Angeles, Maxwell continued to go downhill for another four days. On the fifth day he woke up and was completely lucid, remembering only a promise from the boukur that initiation would come.

Craven's own initiation into drugs was through hallucinogenics. His early days were spent in a sort of communal situation in New York, enjoying an open lifestyle of opium, LSD, peyote, 'and a lot of powerful grass. I would quite often edit my films while smoking or at least look at them while stoned.' Now he claims to find inspiration from his dreams, and although his next two films will be horror orientated, his true passion is comedy. 'Throughout high school and college I was known as the class wit. It's always seemed odd to me that I ended up doing these horror films, and in a sense they have a very bizarre sense of humour. When we make them there is a great deal of laughter and giggling. And the more grotesque the horror on the screen, the more you laugh.'

Sebastian FFoulkes and Peter Wix

'The Serpent and the Rainbow' opens Friday. See Film: A-Z for venues.



Above: Wes Craven on location in Haiti for 'The Serpent and the Rainbow'.

Below: Steadman's Seacole costume designs; Joy Elias-Rilwan as Mary Seacole; Michael Bath, playwright.

THEATRE *MICHAEL BATH*

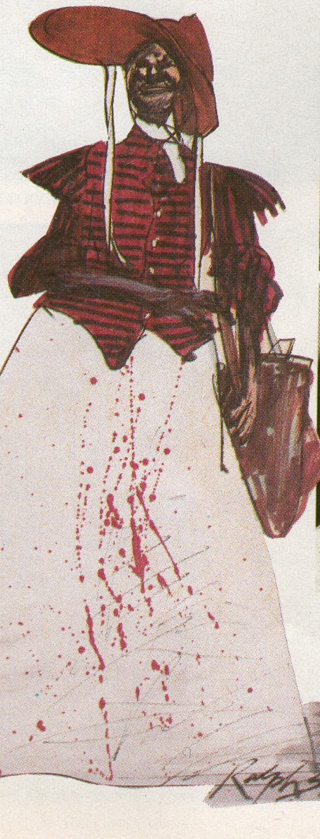
Kentish playwright Michael Bath is also a radio journalist. Did he prefer one career to the other? 'One's my wife and one's my mistress, though I haven't really decided which is which. I suppose I proposed to theatre first, but then I walked out on her. Now she's had me back.' He married young. At 11, he won a Rediffusion playwriting contest (twice). Separation came later, after university (Manchester, then Bristol). 'Writing plays is much harder as a grown-up,' he admits; 'I thought I could more easily earn a living in journalism and there was a long gap in my career.'

Reconciliation came in 1985 when he founded the Dual Control Theatre Company, based in Rochester. Bath's latest, twelfth, play is 'Black Nightingale', an appreciation of the life of Jamaican heroine Mary Seacole. This unsung Victorian adventurer of mixed West Indian parentage nursed the sick in the Caribbean, Panama and the Crimea at a time when her fellows were still being shackled and enslaved. 'She did it because she wanted to,' says Bath of the enigmatic matron who referred to the soldiers as 'her sons'. 'That's why she applied to Florence Nightingale. When she was turned down, she thought, "Up yours, I'm going anyway" and she went off and set up a hotel in the Crimea.'

It is an astonishing story and the fact that time has largely forgotten her is not a little suspicious. Bath aims to put right history's racism. 'This is a play about racial harmony,' he maintains. Fellow Kentishman Ralph Steadman has designed set and costumes, the original drawings of which are expected to grace the Oval Theatre during the run.

Rick Jones

'Black Nightingale' opens at the Oval Theatre on April 19. See Theatre: Fringe listings for details.



WEEK

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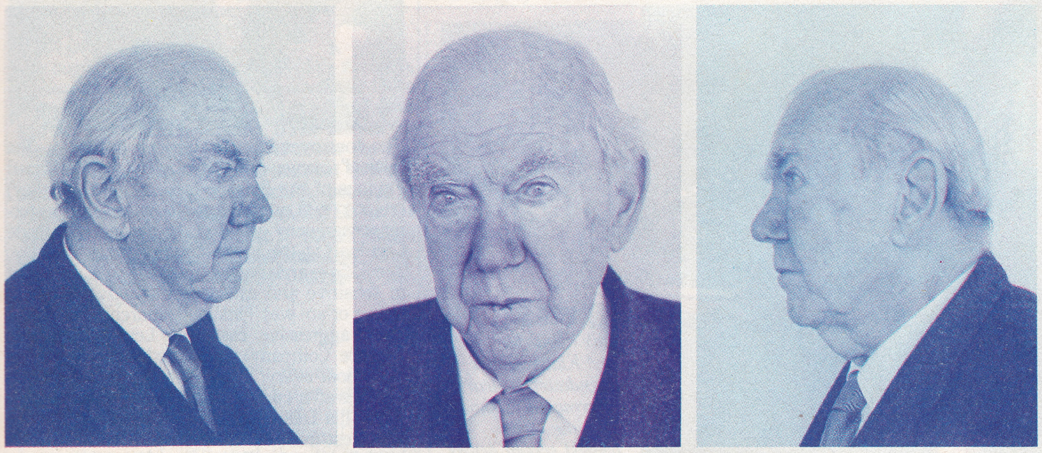

▲ TV

Graham Greene's left, right and centre: the current 'Arena' season comes to an end with 'The Other Graham Greene', a tongue-in-cheek profile of the author and his many doubles. . .

■ SEE PAGE 51

DANCE ▶

American In Paris: American performance artist Mark Tompkins presents 'Nouvelles', inspired by fellow Yank Francophile Gertrude Stein's novella 'Ida', as part of the continuing 'April In Paris' season at The Place, April 24-25.

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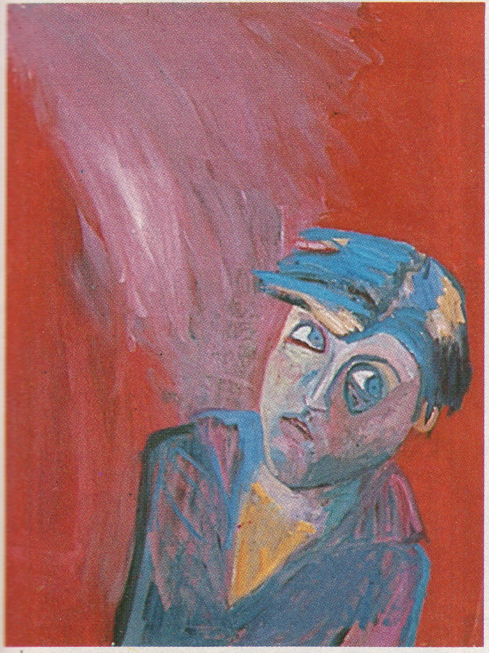
CHRIS NASH



ART ▲

Self-portraits by Lucy Jones at the Angela Flowers Gallery have a startling intensity. In this painting the artist seems to recoil from the rush of her own brushwork.

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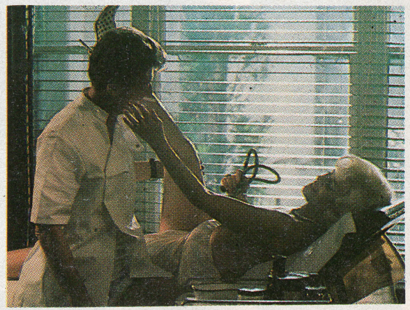
FRONT RUNNERS

ANTHONY 'M BUTTERFLY' HOPKINS'S FAVOURITE PASTIMES

- TV programmes: 'Laurel and Hardy'; 'The Three Stooges'; TV-am — 'negative crap'; 'The Great Gatsby'; er . . . that's all.
- Reading material: Gwyn Thomas's 'Short Stories'; Richard Bott's 'In the Ruins of the Reich'; Tom Wolfe's 'The Bonfire of the Vanities'.

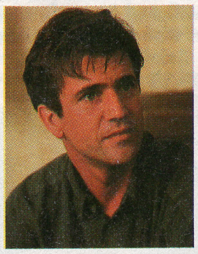


THE CRUELLEST CUT

Scandalous Yank behaviour over 'Scandal'. Producer Steve Woolley has just failed to overturn the movie's 'X' rating in the States, which, although the parallel to its '18' ticket in the UK, in America spells instant commercial disaster. Woolley flew to the US last week on the same day that a rating appeals board voted 8-7 not to reduce it to an 'R', the majority objecting primarily to the brief orgy sequence. Woolley countered that 'the film is about sexual hypocrisy — it's not voyeuristic,' but at the same time said that the orgy scene would be re-edited in an attempt to garner a younger audience. The scene will not be shortened, says Woolley, but it will now include 'less explicit' footage unseen previously. Look out for an orgy compilation pirate tape soon.

WOT, NO AFTERSHAVE?

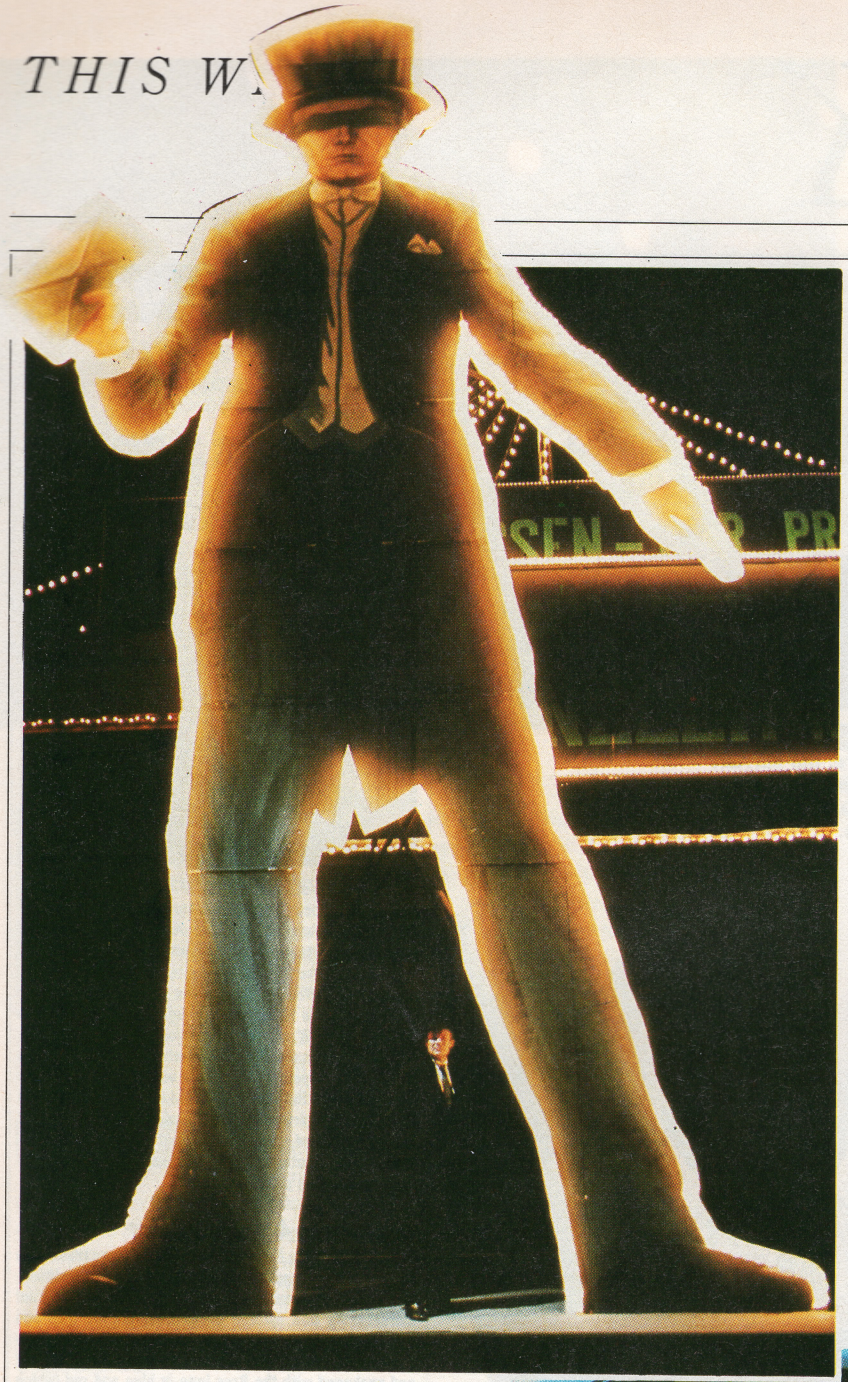
It had to happen. Pop merchandising has reached new heights with the appearance of Bros shampoo, conditioner and styling cream, produced 'exclusively' by Alan Paul hairdressing (the epithet 'never trust anyone with two first names' proves true again). They're sold with the slogan 'Total Control', guaranteed free from animal testing and packaged with the Bros logo in blue and red (which features one band member with their arms up in the air). No surprise, though, to learn that there are as yet no plans for either deodorant (ie no body hair on these fans yet) or shaving foam/aftershave (ditto for stubble).



MORE TALES FROM HOLLYWOOD

Alas poor box office. *Mel Gibson* has been signed up to play, aaagh, Hamlet in a new movie version by Franco Zeffirelli. Says Franco: 'It's very seldom that (Shakespearean) plays are done in a way that kids can identify with' . . . *Spielberg* is known to be very interested in filming Christopher Nolan's life story, as documented in his award-winning 'Under the Eye of the Clock' . . . *Dennis Quaid* says he wants to take time off making movies until he gets his rock band the Eclectica into decent shape. Last weekend you could have seen them at the seventh annual Texas Riverfest . . . *Tom Waits*'s next project will involve a trip to Germany to work on a play with Robert 'The Civil Wars' Wilson and William S Burroughs. Should be a contrast with his latest movie with Keith Carradine, 'Cold Feet', billed as 'a comic fable about greed, lust and high-fashion footwear'.

THIS W



◀ FILM

Talk about the tall guy! Klaus Maria Brandauer is clearly determined to show he's one of the biggest screen actors around in Istvan 'Mephisto' Szabo's 'Hanussen', the tale of a soldier wounded during the Great War who becomes a clairvoyant, and gains himself a problematic reputation in Nazi Germany.

■ SEE PAGE 31

▼ MUSIC

Salif Keita, in town to celebrate his astounding new album 'Ko-Yan' (Mango/Island) and to perform a one-off date with his superb Malian band at the Academy, Brixton.

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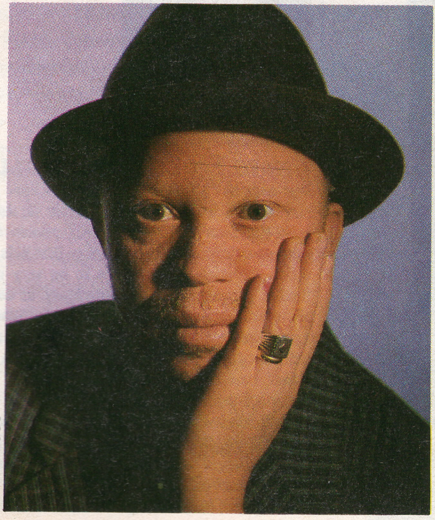


ADRIAN BOOT

TV ▲

'Club X', Channel 4's ambitious new arts and entertainment show, explodes onto our screens in a flurry of hopeful anticipation on Wednesday, 26 April at 10.15pm. This is the prog that's sapped the bulk of the channel's 'youth' budget, but will it be money well spent?

■ SEE PAGE 51

ALSO THIS WEEK

The controversial and satirical ● **'AIDS — The Musical'** (songs by Vi Subversa and Richard Famous of the Poison Girls, and Pete Shelley) returns to London for three benefit performances (money goes to Lesbian and Gay Pride Carnival) at the Shaw Theatre from Tuesday, April 25 — and clearly, given the title, we're not in sensitive and caring Patti Caldwell territory . . . or are we? This loud, anarchic and buoyantly aggressive cast (the Lenya Hobnoobs Theatre Company) is pointedly irreverent on just about every untouchable AIDS icon: five minutes after curtain-up and we're on the prime-time Cilla Diamonte TV chat-show with James Nat-West from the Dennis Dicks Trust delivering 'alarming predictions', and warnings about sharing sex-toys (Cilla comments: 'There you go, everyone should carry around their own bath plugs'), fist-fucking, rimming, and water sports. And things get even *more* tasteful, spiralling through victimisation, murder, fascism, Her Majesty's Hospices For The Criminally Infected . . . and *revolution*. There's a potent timely message in the singing, dancing and lampooning: things are going *seriously* wrong, and being *nice* won't fix 'em.

Calderon's ● **'The Doctor of Honour'**, a 350-year-old tale of treachery and revenge, is given some serious treatment by Cheek by Jowl at the Donmar Warehouse where it opens on Tuesday. Nigel Terry plays the jealous noble who wrongly suspects his young, lusty wife (Michelle Fairley) of infidelity. Lindsay Posner directs.

Super trooper Hitler is the subject of a special BBC1 documentary ● **'The Fatal Attraction of Adolf Hitler'** to be shown on Friday, April 21 at 10.20pm. The film makes use of hitherto unseen archive footage as well as interviews with former Hitler Youth members, Brown Shirts and close associates of the messianic madman to investigate the phenomenon behind the itsy bitsy moustache. How did a nation who could turn a little car into an adored pet come to accept fascism? However, it must be said that mention is made of the Germans' lack of beach etiquette.

Of the films opening this week, two of the most promising are foreign language. ● **'Daughter of the Nile'** hails from the mean streets of modern-day Taipei. Gangsters and gigolos are set against adolescent angst, but under the direction of Taiwan's Hou Xiaoxian the resulting conflict rings true. The title takes its name from the more vivid brand of Japanese literature, and the young heroine lifts her head from such books long enough to keep her policeman father and criminal brother from doing each other in. Surrounding the central con characters is a wonderfully complex pattern of thwarted lovers and everyday frustration. And it's funny, too. ● **'Chocolat'** marks the promising feature debut of Claire Denis, former assistant to Wenders, Jarmusch and Rivette. The film is set against the crumbling Empire of French West Africa, where a bizarre assortment of exploiters find themselves at the mercy of their own weaknesses and evil deeds. The exotic backdrop doesn't detract from Denis's powerful political message. She's a name to be watched.

EIGHT DAYS

Sidelines, London Beat and the Hillsborough Disaster

On The Road Again

How many fringe actors can you get in a mini? No, we don't know either, but there are likely to be plenty of opportunities to find out now that British Rail has abolished its cut-price travel scheme for showbiz staff. BR has refused to renew the six-year-old agreement with Entertainment Express, which organises the cheap tickets, because it wasn't making them enough money. But EE has the last laugh: it says BR now stands to lose £1 million a year in business as touring companies and theatrical groups, unable to afford BR's full fares, take reluctantly to the road.

Hands Off

And so farewell then, Terry Hands, after 23 years' service at the RSC and a week after Jane Edwardes's prescient analysis of the theatre's woes in these very pages. Of course, TH won't be quitting until 1991, and the RSC's board won't even be announcing its selection process for his successor until this week's meeting. A spokesperson told us there were no clear favourites either inside or outside the building but it seems obvious that Adrian Noble, currently basking in Plantagenet glow, has a clear lead over his internal rivals. A decision to risk a bright young thing like Gary Hinds, Nick Hytner or Deborah Warner is popular in some quarters but seems unlikely. Meanwhile, after all the Bobby Robson-style flak that Hands has received since his disastrous 'Carrie' flop on Broadway, let us remember him as director of the glorious 'Cyrano De Bergerac', the onlie begetter of the best 'Much Ado' in recent memory and for a very fine relationship with both 'Henry V' and the 'Wars of the Roses'. Though he was known as the gauleiter and said to be in serious need of a sleep cure (funnily enough he's on holiday at pres) we always found him helpful and receptive. Certainly Hands's successor will find just as many problems as the black-suited Birmingham graduate inherited when he took over in 1986.

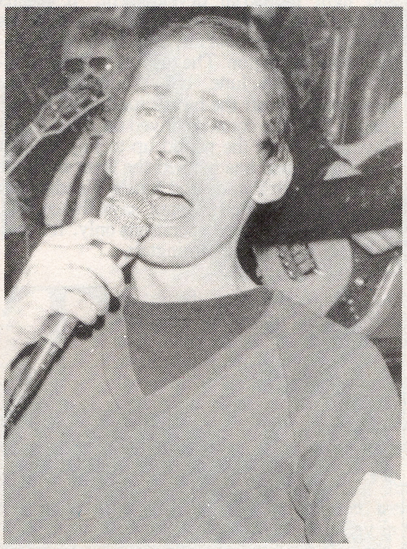
PRESS ASSOCIATION

Two-Fisted Or Two-Faced?

A recent edition of *Boxing News* gloated that Miniature for Sport Colin Moynihan had sung the praises of the noble art of self-defence at a Boxing Writers' Club dinner. Two totally unconnected facts: Moynihan had the odd punch-up under Marquis Of Queensberry rules while at Oxford. Boxing can cause brain damage. Here's another two: drunkenness, chair-throwing, racial abuse and death have long been apparent at major boxing promotions and transatlantic satellite screenings of same in British cinemas. The wee man is insisting soccer clubs institute an ID-card membership scheme because of long-past scenes of violence at football grounds. Should not boxing fans be subject to similar rules? Talk about partiality.

Mall Practice

Self-effacing film director Michael Winner seems — so far at least — to be on to a loser over his plan to place a national police memorial outside the bunker-like Citadel in The Mall. Already the Royal Fine Art Commission has complained about the design, by Theo Crosby and Polly Hope of Pentagram. It includes four distinct elements: a bronze group of citizens and a mounted policeman; a large bronze book on a pedestal; an emblematic bronze access hatch to an underground pumproom; and a circular pond containing a tall, gilded statue intended to represent St George and the Dragon. Something there for all tastes, you might have thought, but the RFAC is not alone in having reservations. Westminster Council officers are not thought to be too keen, and now English Heritage has chipped in: the scale, design and layout are not appropriate for the site. It wants something smaller, more coherently designed — and it wants it somewhere else. Winner, who heads the charity paying for the memorial, hadn't heard of EH's complaints but takes the view that the site concerned is ugly anyway, currently hosting nothing more interesting than a ventilator for the underground: 'If they put three dead horses and a ping-pong ball there it would make it look better.'

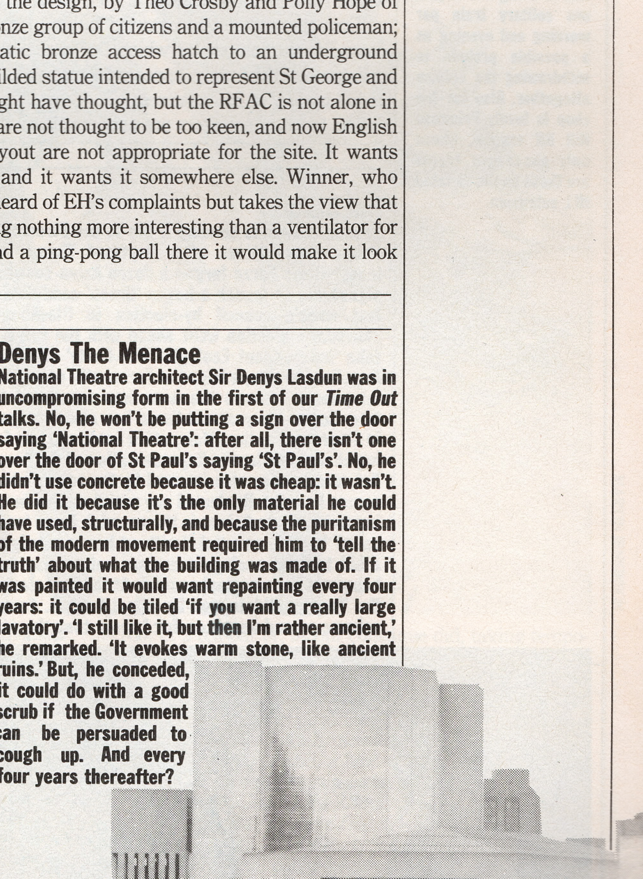


Climbing The Walls

The Walthamstow Real Ale Festival takes place this weekend, boasting the usual assortment of brain-damaging beers, and, on Saturday, a very special guest. Yes, it's Michael Fagan, the man who got into Buckingham Palace and ended up sitting on the end of the Queen's bed passing the time of day. Admission is £2, including a free commemorative pint mug. If memory serves us right a glass ashtray might be a more appropriate memento. . .

Denys The Menace

National Theatre architect Sir Denys Lasdun was in uncompromising form in the first of our *Time Out* talks. No, he won't be putting a sign over the door saying 'National Theatre': after all, there isn't one over the door of St Paul's saying 'St Paul's'. No, he didn't use concrete because it was cheap: it wasn't. He did it because it's the only material he could have used, structurally, and because the puritanism of the modern movement required him to 'tell the truth' about what the building was made of. If it was painted it would want repainting every four years: it could be tiled 'if you want a really large lavatory'. 'I still like it, but then I'm rather ancient,' he remarked. 'It evokes warm stone, like ancient ruins.' But, he conceded, it could do with a good scrub if the Government can be persuaded to cough up. And every four years thereafter?



TRAVEL SICKNESS

British Rail's latest brainwave to ease congestion for London commuters is a plan to cut back on one of the simplest methods of getting to and from the City during the rush-hour. Due for the chop in October are services on the Watford to Liverpool Street peak-time extension to the North London Link which serves a broad swathe of the capital, a move which will force even more people onto the capital's already-overcrowded tubes and buses. The current rush-hour service is being cut to just one solitary train per morning and evening as a possible prelude to withdrawing the service altogether. Also for the chop is lovely Primrose Hill BR station, whose only passenger trains are those on the ill-fated NLL extension.

Deadly Justice

A coroner's jury last week handed down a remarkable open verdict on a young south Londoner who had been found hanging in a magistrates' court holding cell earlier this year. Now his family has refused to take the body away from the coroner's custody and are considering the next step in their fight to establish how he died.

'Dukie' Daley, from Kennington, had been found by a gaoler in a holding cell at Marylebone Magistrates' Court last February. He was in court on a charge of attempted burglary after being arrested in Bayswater by two plain clothes police officers. Daley had a history of schizophrenia, but despite being remanded in Wormwood Scrubs and Brixton prison for several weeks, he was by most accounts coping well and generally cheerful. At court on February 22 he was expecting bail, but new charges of chequebook fraud were suddenly presented to his lawyer. This meant a further adjournment, and led to an angry scene between Daley and his barrister in the holding cell where he was the only prisoner. When she left he was alive. But five minutes later, one of the gaolers told the inquest, he went to the cell to find Daley hanging by a woollen jumper from one of the side bars, at an angle of 45 degrees to the floor, with his feet on the floor.

The jury gave no reason for their verdict, but it is clear that there were elements of the evidence which raised serious doubts in their minds that he had actually killed himself.

First, the pathologist reported finding two small bruises, one on either side of his neck. And secondly, the jumper by which he was hanging and which was presented in court only at the insistence of the family, appeared to be several sizes too small for him, and was not one recognised as his by any of his relatives.

The family's solicitors are now considering what future action to take.

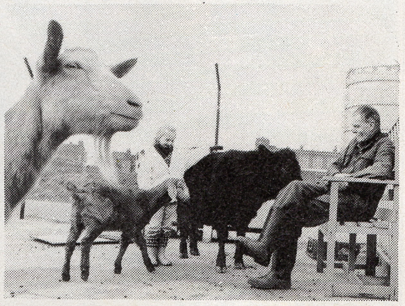
Ink Stains

Special Branch is sending a file to the Director of Public Prosecutions after Deptford Young Tory leader David Furze forged a dozen Asian-sounding signatures to launch a bogus 'Green' candidate in last week's council by-election in Blackheath. Thursday's election went ahead with the name of fake 'Independent Ecologist Non-Party' candidate Angeline Verrillo, a friend of Furze, still on the ballot papers because the hoax was uncovered too late. Seventeen-year-old Furze has since resigned in disgraceover the affair, which could see him facing charges under the Representation of the People Act, and he may also be sued by the voters whose names he used. He denied any racist motive in trying to implicate Asians in the scandal. Furze 'nominated' Verrillo as a 'joke' without her knowledge in a bid to draw ecology-conscious votes away from Labour in the marginal contest. At the last election the Tory candidate won by only 12 votes. Furze's scheme proved unsuccessful: Labour took the seat.

SOUTH LONDON PRESS

Nightmare On Elm Farm

Elm Farm's battle with Wandsworth council for the right to stay on their present site has plumbed new depths of nastiness. The council wants to move the farm to a new site in nearby Falcon Park and sell the farm's land for housing and light industrial development. 'It means starting again from scratch, and it has taken us seven years to get this far,' said farm co-ordinator Ann Fairnington. The dispute will be decided in court in June, but Wandsworth has meanwhile cut off the farm's funding. The last cheque from the council arrived on April Fool's Day, and covers the period up to July 15. But now the council has banned the farm from the Easter Sunday Parade and June's Wandsworth Weekend Show. Both events, says the council, are for council-funded operations only. 'It's really petty,' says Ann Fairnington.



White Elephant

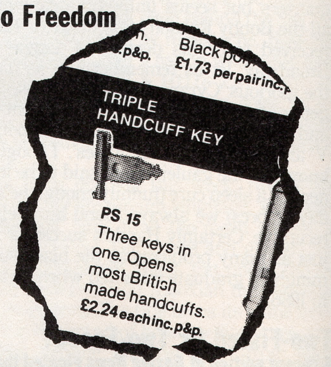
The Elephant Theatre Club in Borough Road has become the first London theatre club to be hit by a new round of prosecutions for breaking the '48-hour rule' for club membership. Artistic director Syd Golder was last week fined £100 and ordered to pay £200 costs for failing to enforce the rule. Introduced in the '60s to regulate late-night West End drinking and gambling clubs, the rule says new members must wait two days before they can see their first play in a fringe theatre club. But the battle over club membership rules is linked to the issue of fire regulations. London councils use the 48-hour rule to force fringe clubs to introduce proper safety measures and become 'legitimate' licensed theatres (as Islington's King's Head theatre plans to do this year) and can sometimes help with the cost involved. Tory MP for Battersea John Bowis recently ridiculed the law in Parliament: 'On occasions a well-meaning local authority can close a theatre down because it doesn't meet the the standards of the Olivier.' Syd Golder, savouring the prospect of martyrdom, says he is prepared to go to jail to protest at the restrictions.

Hard Grafton

THE GRAFTON HOTEL

At the top end of Tottenham Court Road, 20 small businesses, conservationists and local residents are up in arms about a plan to extend the Grafton Hotel to take up an entire block. Although Camden Council has refused planning permission for the development, the hotel owners are taking an appeal to Secretary Of State, Nicholas Ridley. An inquiry begins this week. More than 20 businesses — including a chemist, a greengrocer, a book shop and a restaurant — will be evicted, and the whole Victorian block demolished if the scheme is allowed. 'We are not convinced,' says Roland Collins, vice chairman of the Charlotte St Association, 'that retail outlets which will form part of a large hotel complex will provide what the community needs. They are more likely to cater for what the hotel residents want.'

Key To Freedom



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TRIPLE
HANDCUFF KEY

PS 15
Three keys in
one. Opens
most British
made handcuffs.
£2.24 eachinc.p&p.

A triple handcuff key, which 'opens most British made handcuffs' is just the sort of thing villains might like to get their hands on. So, they'll be gratified to know that for £2.24 the item in question can be obtained by filling in a coupon in, of all places, *Police* magazine. (You can also buy a whistle chain, plastic traffic wand and 'immaculate' socks.) 'It's a classic,' Scotland Yard's press officer hooted, before returning with the comment that police suppliers Troye, Kenning and Spencer always insist on ID. Well they don't. We know better — our key's just arrived in the post. Come round anytime, boys, and we'll give it a go.

'The ticket allocation should have had some regard to the state of the market. Anyone who knows Liverpool fans should have realised that in this situation thousands would turn up without tickets'

Rogan Taylor, Football Supporters Association

'As you look around Hillsborough, you will appreciate why it has been regarded for so long as the perfect venue for all kinds of important matches'

Bert McGee, Sheffield Wednesday chairman in the 'Matchday' programme

'I know that many fans want to stand to watch the game, but we must now accept that every spectator at an event of the kind we saw at Sheffield must have his own space and that means a seat'

Denis Howell MP, former Minister for Sport

'They died for us, really'

Peter Beardsley, Liverpool FC player

'Football was the only thing we did as a family, and now we're not a family any more'

Trevor Hicks, father of two girls killed at Hillsborough

MONITOR SYNDICATION

'This tragedy has clearly shown that the current legislation to provide ID cards is irrelevant'

Denis Howell MP

'Second time around, how do you react?'

TV commentator Gerald Sinstadt to Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish

'Football is totally irrelevant when something like this happens'

Kenny Dalglish, Liverpool FC, manager

MARTIN JENKINSON

The tragedy at Hillsborough was the disaster that was waiting to happen. While the Football Association, Football League, Government and South Yorkshire Police play pass-the-buck, it should not be assumed that the horrifying events of Saturday were a one-off accident, a cruel trick of fate against Liverpool FC. The crush of supporters in 'animal' cages occurs regularly in the sections for visiting fans at most big matches where they are treated like livestock by the 'welcoming' authorities. A member of *Time Out*'s staff, Dave Faulkner, went to Leicester City's Filbert Street ground on Saturday in the hope of seeing Chelsea promoted to the First Division. Some 7,000 travelling fans were penned into a cruelly tight segment of the ground which could hold only 5,000. Amid a tumult of screaming girls and crying children, fans in the pen begged to be let in to the empty section next to the crowded section, which police refused to do until they had cleared Leicester supporters from the *next* section along. This they never did. Eventually, a few of the smallest children were passed over the fence into the empty area. A father who wished to join his son was told by a policeman, 'Climb over that fence and you're nicked.' The pressure continued until some fans squeezed out of the crush by scaling walls, climbing onto the roof of a tea bar or, as our colleague did, taking temporary refuge in the toilets which had of necessity become unisex. Such mayhem is not an uncommon scene. In the aftermath of Hillsborough, Arsenal FC suggested that such an episode could not occur at their Highbury Stadium. Not so. Again another *TO* staff member, news editor Andrew Bell, was in the Clock End, a fenced-in area for away supporters, to see the team he supports, Plymouth Argyle, play Arsenal in an FA Cup Third Round tie in January 1987. He wrote in Sidelines at the time that 'a terrifying crush developed on the terraces. Kids were being ferried to get them out of harm's way, and panic began to set in as the crowd pressed onto crash barriers.' Again the police were intransigent, not allowing fans to move into empty sections of terracing: 'If you come over this fence you're nicked.' At least twice this season similar crushes have developed in the away end at West Ham. Because there are no fences, fans spilled on the pitch and were led into emptier areas of the ground. These instances are but a minute proportion of similar incidents which occur each week at inhumanely policed soccer stadiums. It is pure chance that a dreadful tragedy like that at Hillsborough on Saturday has taken so long to happen.

Geoff Brown

WENDY & LISA

STRANGE FRUIT

Formerly leading Prince Revolutionaries, now bettering themselves solo and with a second album — 'Fruit At The Bottom' — out now, Wendy & Lisa hit the Town and Country Club this week with their inimitable brand of feminised funk.

Who remembers the melanoma on Reagan's nose? I mean, in the way it would like to be remembered — for *itself*. No one does, of course. Now it is a worthless and irrelevant blob of cancer, a statistic on a medical record, a byte on a CIA computer languishing in a file marked 'Communist Cells'. Reagan's blob is only memorable for its former attachment.

Wendy Melvoin and Lisa Coleman sometimes get to feel that way, I imagine. Wendy and Lisa *who*? Weren't they Prince's? Before Cat and Bonnie? Two shaggy attachments to the Revolution (Prince's pre-'Lovesexy' band) who shook their heads and played a bit of guitar and synthesizer to fill out the picture? Wendy and Lisa — two more bytes stored up in the laden memory bank of notable *sidepersons*.

I never really understood what happened when the Revolution disbanded.

'Neither did we. Want some coffee?'

No, but seriously. . .

'We-e-ell,' Wendy looks pained, 'I suppose it was a question of the whole outfit being in limbo after the "Parade" tour. Prince was getting real antsy-pantsy, he needed another big change in his life. You never know with this guy, but there it was: Prince said "I want to do this next part by myself and I want you kids to go and do it by yourselves as well".' She looks at the ceiling and hangs her big jaw out like a digger, and sighs. 'It was a big shock. We were going, "NO!, but yeah, I guess you're right. No but yes. No but yes." We laugh sometimes — I mean it was obviously a PMT decision.'

It must be great to be able to toss your mane and say that you don't need Prince anymore. Wendy and Lisa's second album, 'Fruit At The Bottom', though not unflawed, is an impressive gesture of intent. 'Fruit', true to its title, has flavour, juice and roughage; it's a canny feminisation of the first funk principles of Sly Stone, and they did it themselves, except for pal Carla, who did the drums.

Wendy: 'Hmmm. Well the first album was a bit serious. We were going through heavy changes at the time, the songs were a bit selfish, all about getting feelings out of our system. In fact, we weren't even thinking about doing a record. We were just recording, y'know? This new one is an *album*.'

They've known each other since childhood, growing up in California, the offspring of musical families. Lisa, the older of the twain, was already an integral part of Prince's band when Wendy tipped up with her guitar at a sound-check. Asked to fill in a rhythm part while the midget tooled off to the back of the hall to check for balance, she acquitted herself with such aplomb that an invitation to join the Revolution on a permanent basis was soon forthcoming. Wendy calls it fairy-tale luck.

They are an odd couple. Lisa, round-faced, soft-spoken, sits back on their sofa, hands clasped around one knee like a sling. She is a careful egg-shape next to her partner's squiggle. Wendy's elbows, eyebrows, chin and knees cavort. At every opportunity her eyes widen, limbs convulse and her comedy-husk sinks to a stage whisper — the ideal silo from which to launch an intercontinental crescendo of volume and animation.

We're talking about pop videos. 'I think it's an unfortunate medium right now. It's not *art* for a start! I mean, you hear about these bands in the States who don't even have a record out but they're releasing a video, "because the band's got such a fantastic look!" What *is* this! I'm going, Holy shit! We're in big trouble! Our video (an unadorned 'performance' vid) came on TV the other day and it looked *totally* out of place.'

I explain that 'Moonwalker', Michael Jackson's expensive and tedious home movie, was given a theatrical release in this country, unlike in the States where it remains strictly confined to the home video-hire market. 'Oh-my-God-no! I've seen some of it. It's preposterous. Like total masturbation!' And I take this as an invitation to launch my own favourite rant about the current vogue amongst expensive pop stars for the fatuous transubstantiation of pop into a pseudo-theatre.

'Well quite,' says Wendy. 'A lot of people have said that about the "Lovesexy" show. According to a lot of people, the main problem with that tour was that there was no music. It was really like a test of aerobic ability, that tour. But I understood what he was doing . . . And next time it's gonna be incredible. I guarantee you he'll probably do something like strip it all down and play, like 2½ hours of non-stop music. He'll exaggerate the music to its quintessential point and fulfill all those people who were disappointed this time. Because he knows . . .'

While Lisa confines herself to the occasional dry observation ('A friend of mine says she likes to watch me on stage because I look like I'm doing the dishes,' she says of her own economical performance at the keyboard), Wendy is wetting herself over the iniquities of the pop rat-race.

'The mentality of pop culture is tuned to ass-kicking. It's business, it's competition, that's all it is. Herbie Hancock doesn't go out there and record an album to kick Chick Corea's ass; Led Zeppelin didn't make records to kick Aerosmith's ass; Stravinsky wasn't trying to kick Aaron Copland's ass. We're not competitors. Okay, it's the nature of the beast, you gotta play the game a little bit to get somewhere, but it's a real stinky business. I keep getting this horrible picture in my head of all these pop stars leaning back at the end of the day and going, "WOW! I SURE KICKED SOME ASS TODAY, DIDN'T I!"'

But isn't this just America? I ask the standard British 'politics' question.

W: 'How do I feel about the new regime? Well, I'm scared to death. I think the past nine years have been very scary for Americans, not to mention everyone else.'

L: 'Bush is already making bad decisions — they're calling Quayle assassination insurance. It's real scary. I mean, if I was a terrorist I'd pick on Americans too.'

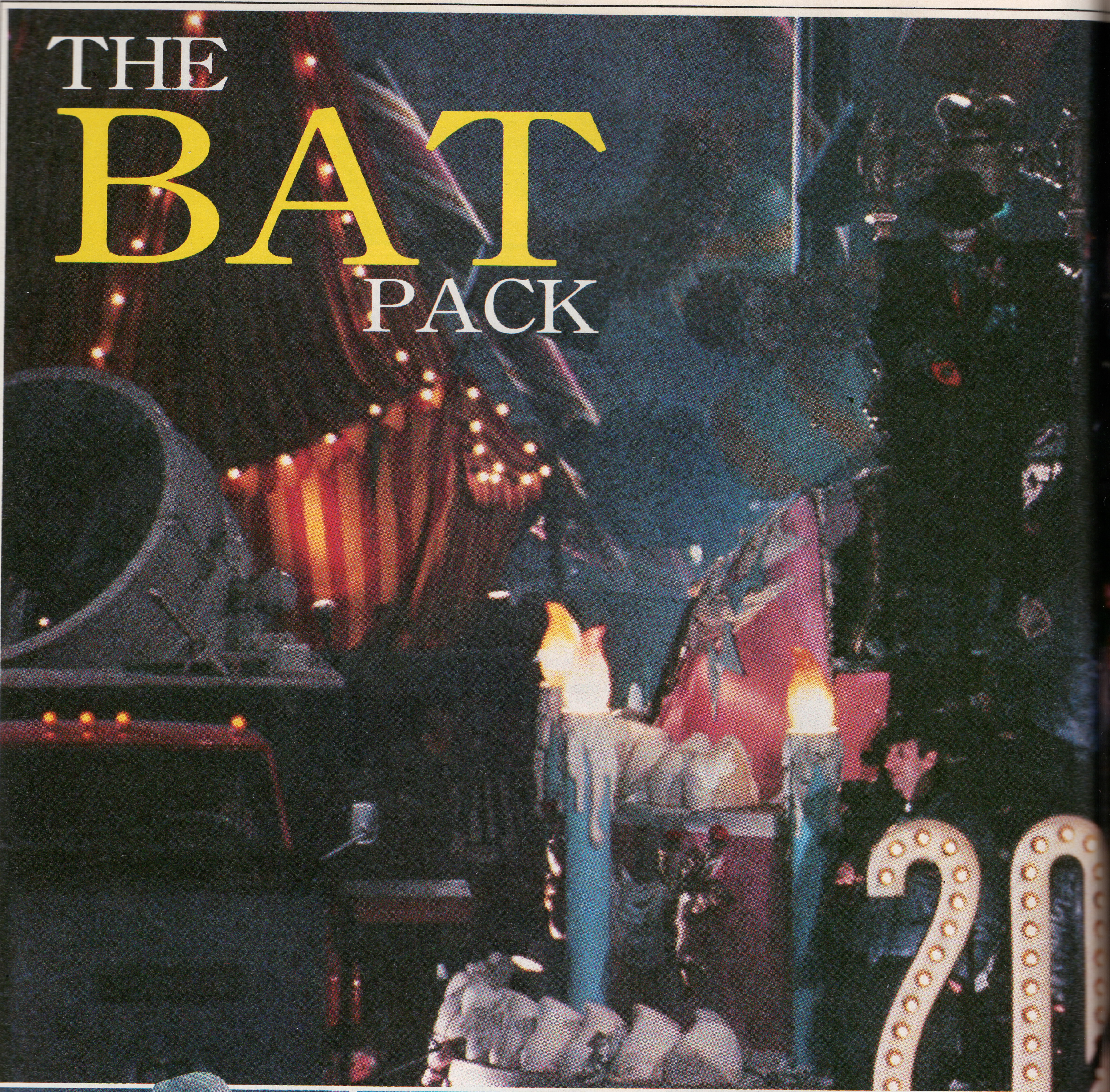
And so on, until it's time for tea.

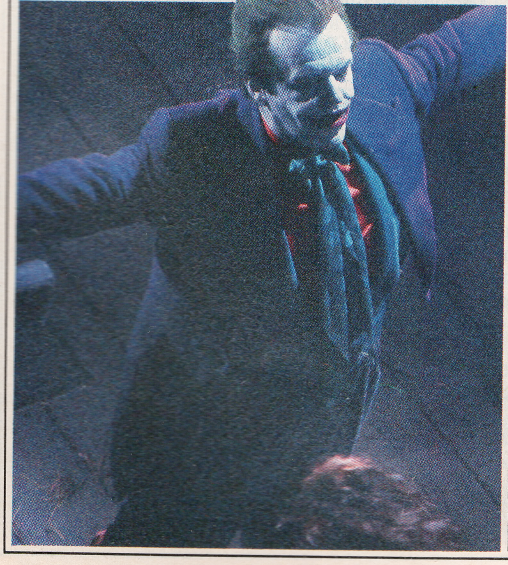
No doubt there are some Americans who'd regard Wendy and Lisa as a melanoma on the nose of the Land Of The Free, which would be terribly ignorant. But as Wendy says, 'Lisa can humble my ass real quick. I can get real cocky sometimes and she just corks my cockiness.' 'Gee-willickers!' says Lisa. ☐

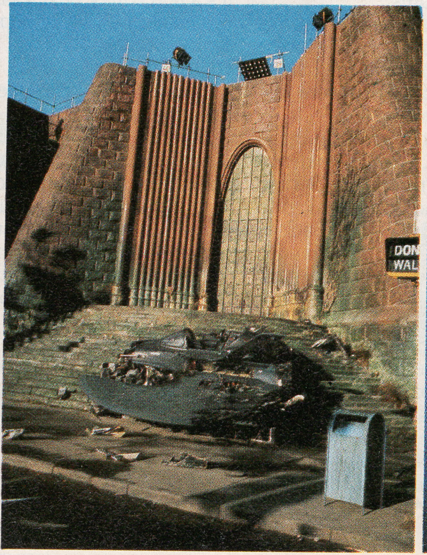
Wendy & Lisa's current single, taken from 'Fruit At The Bottom' (Virgin), is 'Lolly Lolly'. They play the Town & Country Club on April 25 & 26.

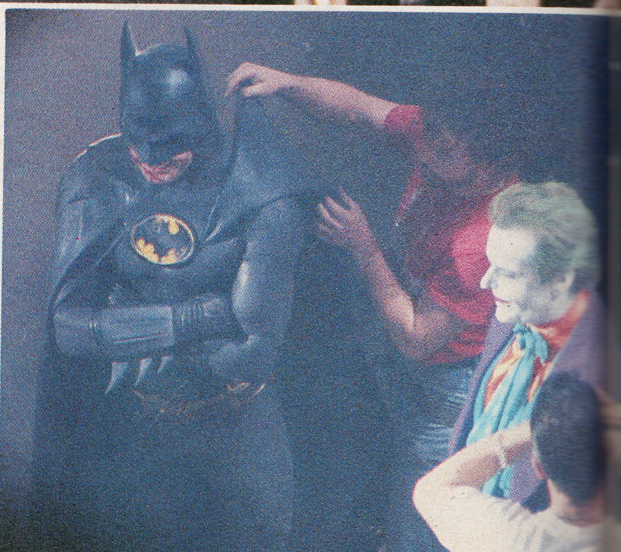
BY NICK COLEMAN

THE BAT PACK









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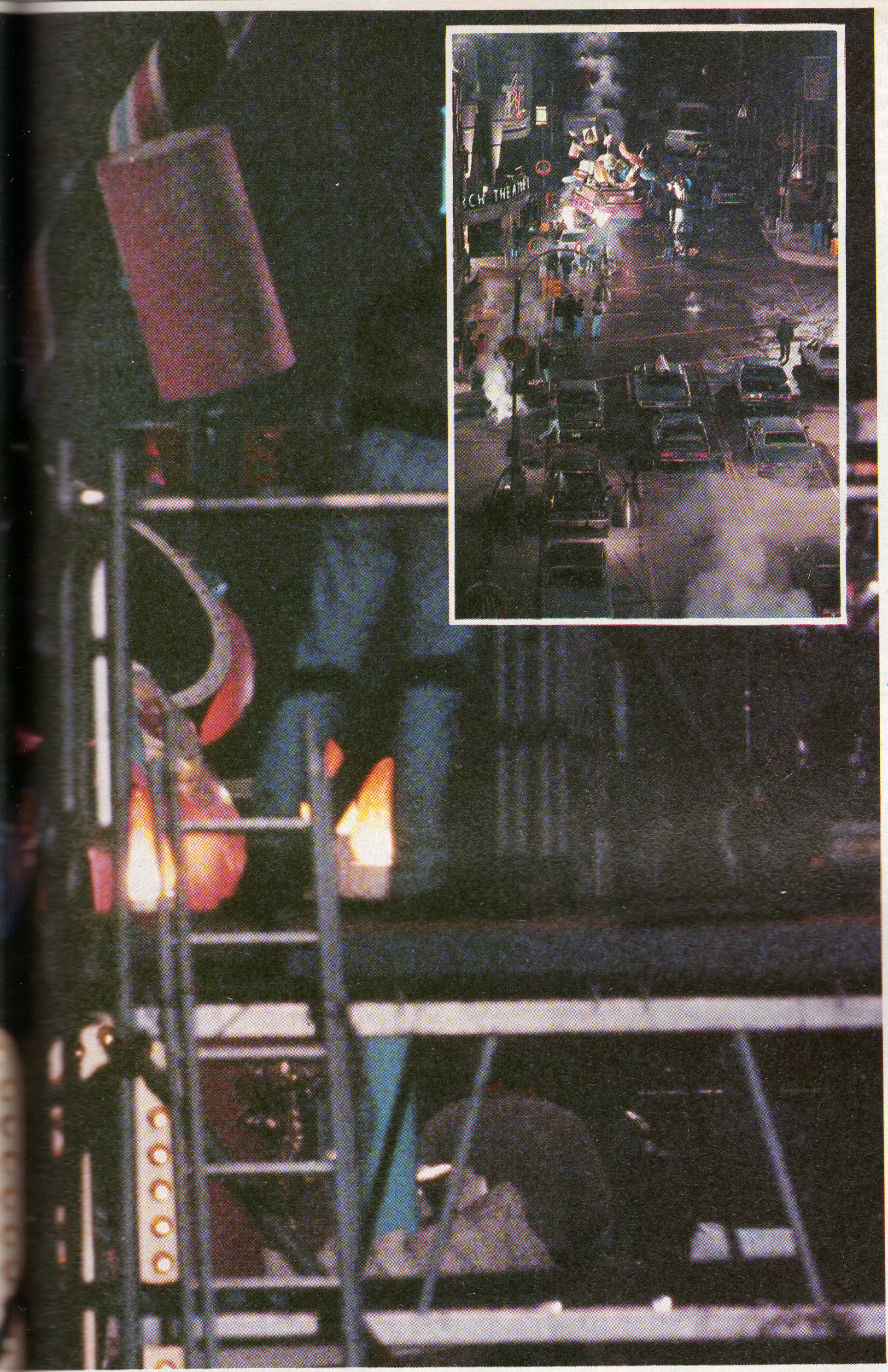

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There's a world-wide movie-makers' rush to film our comic-book heroes: from 'Dick Tracy', starring Warren Beatty and Madonna, to the Gilliam-directed 'The Watchmen'; from Jim Belushi in 'The Flintstones' to 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles'. But the daddy of them all, promising greatness, is the controversial 'Batman', whose plots, sets and dangerous visions have been super-secret . . . until now.

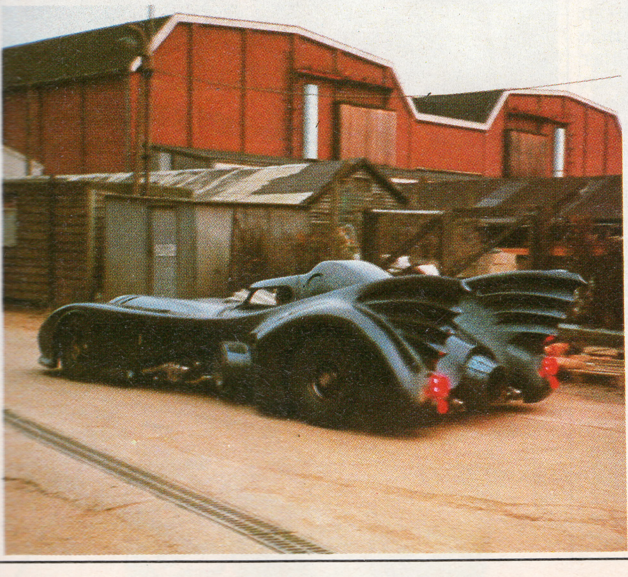
The *Daily Mail* sends a helicopter over Pinewood to photograph behind the scenes on the 'Batman' movie. Pow! The *News of the World* does a picture-spread under the heading 'Batman Goes Bonkers Over Spiderman's Snaps' (Warner Bros failed to obtain an injunction at the High Court). Ooof! One person is jailed for trying to sell an illegal copy of the film. Kerblam! Protests in America make the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*, headlined 'Batman Fans Fear The Joke's On Them In Hollywood Epic'.

It's hard dragging superheroes into the '80s. Maybe no one should even have tried; maybe Batman should have been allowed to keep his absurd sound effects, his alliterative villains, his shark-repellent bat-spray. This guy dresses up like a bat and calls himself a symbol of Truth, Justice and the American Way — well, good luck to him, just don't be surprised if we laugh behind his cape. Then along comes Frank Miller's comic book 'Dark Knight', and suddenly Batman's not so funny. Suddenly we've got this fucked-up guy, this guy whose parents were blown away before his very eyes when he was a kid, this morally and mentally ambiguous character who's maybe a little schizophrenic, maybe not quite so certain that you shouldn't meet violence with violence, and suddenly we're *scared*; we're not laughing anymore. These are the two images of Batman, and the problem is that the comic fans and film-makers on the one hand, and the press and public on the other, have got a radically different idea of what Batman is all about.

Director Tim Burton says: 'It's a very difficult film. You have the TV series, which is camp, and you have the "Dark Knight". What I love about that is they've taken the Batman psychology and gone back to that, and they've blown apart the convention of comics. Hopefully the movie will do the same for the movies.' And yet, the Batfans argue, how could a director like Tim Burton, whose previous credits are 'Pee-Wee's Big Adventure' and 'Beetlejuice', not camp it up? Why did he not choose a taller actor with a squarer jaw to play Batman than Michael Keaton? How could Jack Nicholson not play the Joker for laughs? And how can one take seriously *any* film with Jerry Hall in it?

Warner Bros were finding themselves broadsided by comics fans on the one hand, on the other by press rumours (much exaggerated) about production delays and spiralling costs — a £35-40 million budget is often quoted, whereas the true figure is closer to £25 million. The set was closed, interviews denied — except with Bob Kane, co-creator of Batman in 1939 and now a creative consultant to the film, whose approval helped mollify the fans. But now, with shooting long completed and the film due for London release in August, it's time to sort out the facts, and look at the wider implications: if the film is a success, and it undoubtedly will be (in America, kids are going to the cinema just to catch the 90-second *trailer* — a trend that might just catch on here now that it's showing with Clint Eastwood's 'The Dead Pool'), the signs are that it will set the trend for a whole wave of comics-related movies. Terry Gilliam has just been signed up to direct 'The Watchmen'; Dolph ▷

BY DOMINIC WELLS



Above: Jack Nicholson as the Joker prepares for the big parade scene in which he threatens to gas Gotham residents; indent: Gotham's main street, in the longest set since 'Cleopatra'. Left to right: Grinning Jack the Joker; the Batwing demolished; Keaton and Nicholson, all dressed up and ready to go; the new-look Batmobile.

BATMOBILE/REX FEATURES

LITTLE FOXY!
CAN I SAY SOMEPIN' ?
WHAT IS IT?
WELL! PLEASE 'SCUSE ME, DADDY... I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS GOING TO MAKE THOSE TWO GUYS DEAD... BUT I KNEW THEY WANTED TO HURT YOU, DADDY!
YOU'RE COMPLETELY EXCUSED, MY BOY!

Lundgren is playing 'The Punisher'; Warren Beatty and Madonna are filming 'Dick Tracy', with Al Pacino and Dustin Hoffman, we kid you not, just announced in cameo roles; Brooke Shields and Timothy Dalton co-star in 'Brenda Starr'; 'The Return of Swamp Thing' will beat 'Batman' on to the screen. *Comics Scene* magazine in America lists no less than 60 films based on comic characters, from superheroes to newspaper cartoons, in various stages of development; and you can bet your Batmobile that the money to make them will pour in as soon as the caped crusader cleans up at the box office.

'You put Arnold Schwarzenegger in a Batsuit and it's actually very absurd. You have more potential to laugh at that than anything. But with Keaton . . . there are a few actors that when you look at their eyes you see a lot going on' Director Tim Burton

BARE-BREASTED SPACE SIREN

There is a long and less than glorious tradition of comics in film. On the whole they have failed, largely because, until 1978, the special effects were not up to making you believe a man could fly; Jane Fonda's celluloid version of Jean-Claude Forret's bare-breasted space siren, 'Barbarella', was in 1967 an honourable if camp exception. In Batman's own big screen début, back in 1943, his costume fit so badly he might have borrowed it from Fatty Arbuckle. It's a mistake Warner Bros are determined not to repeat. The set of Gotham City alone cost £3 million to build and is the biggest outdoor set since 'Cleopatra', as integral to the film as was 'Blade Runner's'. It looks gorgeous: dark, oppressive, brooding, as far removed from the Metropolis of 'Superman' as that was from Fritz Lang's original.

Tim Burton demanded that it should be like 'Hell has erupted from the streets and just carried on growing.' Designer Anton Furst says he tried to imagine how New York would have looked if it had all gone wrong, if there had been no zoning laws or planning permission. He threw together skyscrapers inspired by prison architecture or by Gaudi, Victorian bridges by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, brownstone buildings with fascist fronts, with massive ventilation shafts rising up everywhere. The result is 'just brutality, absolute brutality', calling to mind all eras and none, as negatively futuristic as Terry Gilliam's 'Brazil'. This is not your stereotype comic-book utopia, and such a gritty backdrop is vital to fostering the conviction in audiences that such intrinsically ridiculous characters as Batman and the Joker are real, and to be feared.

Tim Burton dismisses out of hand accusations of camp casting: 'Jack Nicholson *is* the Joker. He's toyed with extreme characters before, but this is the ultimate. He *knows* that the Joker is the killer — you know that's going to be great. He can go wild, and still it'll be real.' No doubt his box-office muscle helps, too, as does Jerry Hall's as his girlfriend Alicia. Other biggish names include Billy Dee Williams (Lando Clarissian from 'Star Wars') as Harvey Dent, aka the villainous Two-Face, and Jack Palance as Carl Grisson. Then of course there's Kim Basinger as Vicki Vale, girl reporter, a character uncomfortably close to Superman's Lois Lane and who featured little in the comic books. It's to her that Batman finally loses his virginity, after market research in America suggested this would be popular. Other characters such as the Penguin, Riddler and Robin the Boy Wonder are being saved for the sequels — names dropped in connection with the roles are Danny de Vito, Robin Williams and Michael J Fox respectively.

And Batman himself? Pierce Brosnan was considered, though not tested, Charlie Sheen was very keen, Mel Gibson's name was dropped to the press, and Adam West, the original Batman, confessed himself 'shattered, torpedoed, *riven*' not to get the part; it's said he was offered a brief cameo as the father of Bruce Wayne, Batman's secret identity, but turned it down. 'Originally,' says producer Jon Peters, 'when we got involved in the project many years ago, we were thinking about Bill Murray, somebody who could be funny, offbeat and aggressive. And when Mark Canton, Peter Gruber and I saw "Beetlejuice", we went, "Wow!". Michael is so explosive in that character and almost *dangerous*.'

'Michael Keaton was a less obvious choice,' agrees Tim Burton, the long-haired 30-year-old Boy Wonder who, looking like a comic character himself, strides about the set in Gothic black. 'But I could *see* him putting on a Batsuit. I mean truthfully. I thought about it a lot. I met a lot of what you could call square-jawed actors that I felt were good actors, but I just didn't feel it was enough. You put Arnold Schwarzenegger in a Batsuit and it's actually very absurd. You have more potential to laugh at that than anything. But with Keaton . . . there are a few actors that when you look at their eyes you see a lot going on.'

GOTHAM CITY STALKER

Early clips suggest that the movie will be very funny, but not tongue-in-cheek; sinister, but not messily violent; lightning fast, but not frenetic. Most of the film is taken up with Batman's origins: the shooting of his parents and his inheritance of stately Wayne Manor, and the subsequent efforts of two journalists, played by Kim Basinger and Robert Wuhl, to prove that a Bat Man stalks Gotham City. Says Wuhl, 'Quietly, alone, he goes out and gets the bad guys. It's like he says when he grabs the first guy, "I *own* the night." He's a dangerous man. Batman would break your arm!' And when he crashes through the skylight of the Fluggelheim Museum, does a half-turn in mid-air and parachutes smoothly down with his cape unfolding like wings to sweep Kim Basinger from the Joker's clutches, then she *knows* she's on to the story of the century.

Despite early reservations, Michael Keaton is fabulous; but his rather diminutive physique is not naturally suited to the part. Accordingly his costume is not of skin-tight, paunch-revealing nylon like Adam West's, but a rubbery body armour, designed by Bob Ringwood and similar to his creations for David Lynch's 'Dune'; there's also a rigid mask which forces his chin to jut out heroically.

Michael Keaton has two stunt doubles: one for fights, and a trained dancer for the more athletic scenes, leaving Keaton with only the close-ups and the gravelly voice. All the action sequences are filmed not by Burton but by British second-unit director Peter McDonald. 'There is much more depth to the Batman character than I thought he would have,' he says during a break. 'Tim, being the way Tim is, has made him a stranger character than maybe people would realise at first. It's very difficult walking around in a rubber suit, so Tim has made him quite a strange person. There's a certain worry about Batman's sanity sometimes.'

In many ways Keaton's average build is *more* faithful to the spirit of Batman, whose attraction has always been that you could identify with him, dream of yourself doing the same things — given the right costume. He is, after all, unique amongst superheroes in that he's just a glorified detective, with no superpowers: you don't need to be bitten by a radioactive spider like Spiderman (soon to be a Cannon film), or be bathed by the rays of a Kryptonian sun like Superman (a fifth film is mooted, this time without Christopher Reeve); just think of yourself as Philip Marlowe in drag. That's why producer Jon

SMASH
WHERE'S ROGUE?

Above: 'Barbarella', fleshed out by Jane Fonda — one of the more successful early comic adaptations.
Right: Dolph Lundgren as the ultra-violent 'The Punisher', his costume divested of the comic strip's skull.

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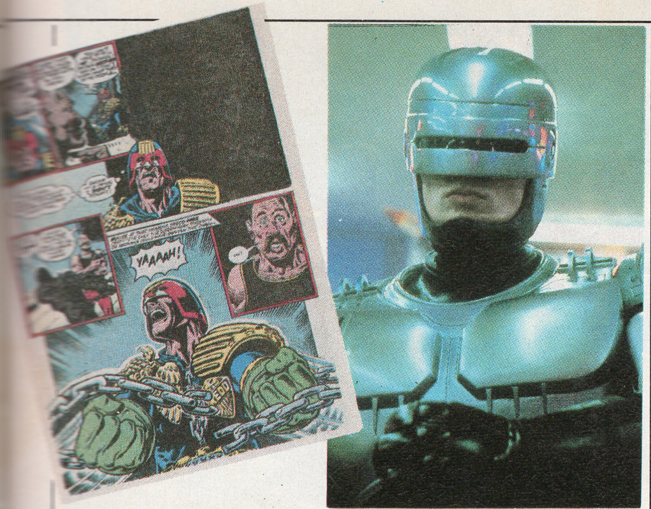

Peters has spent nine years trying to get this film together, before 'Dark Knight' and the hype-potential of Batman's 50th anniversary made it commercially viable: 'I grew up on Batman, I was a Batman fanatic. When I was a kid, I always used to go off to parties in a Batman outfit, and jump off second stories on to people.'

There is, however, a problem here: on the one hand, comics like 'Batman' are becoming more adult, more chilling and morally ambiguous; on the other, making the special effects believable on film is too costly to allow anything more than a PG rating. Most ill-fated of all was George Lucas's 'Howard the Duck', re-titled 'Howard — A New Breed of Hero' for British release after flirting with the new title of 'Howard the Turkey'. One of Marvel Comics' earliest older-readership publications, its joke was that here's a cigar-smoking, wise-cracking, woman-chasing *duck*, fercrissakes; to win a PG rating George Lucas kept the bit about Howard being a duck, and ditched the rest.

'Batman' should achieve an honourable compromise, despite having to be PG-13; and if in Britain the Film Classification Board decides on a 15 rating, which seems likely unless the new Westminster PG-12 rating catches on, Warners publicity spokesman Frank Saigner is adamant that the film won't be cut. It doesn't exactly soft-pedal on the violence (gone are the water pistols and elaborate ineffectual death-traps of the '60s Joker — this guy is *lethal*), but it can never approach the macabre devices of the comics. In last year's Batman book, 'The Killing Joke', the Joker shoots Commissioner Gordon's daughter through the spine, rapes her paralysed body, and later tries to drive the Commissioner insane with photos of the deed. In the climactic confrontation of 'Dark Knight', after blinding the Joker in one eye, Batman only just stops short of throttling him to death; at which the Joker, in his last and best punchline, breaks his own neck so Batman will take the rap for his murder. Originally, the Joker was to have met his death in the film, too, toppling from an 800-foot church tower; an alternative ending has now been shot, while Warner Bros execs thrash out whether the character will be needed in the sequels.

There is one exception to this rule: 'The Punisher' movie, starring Dolph Lundgren and adapted from a feeble-minded but hugely popular action comic. It's made by New World Pictures, renowned for their effective but relatively low-budget sci-fi pics, who bought Marvel Comics two years ago together with the rights to its characters and recently sold it again for $82.5 million. The film is, according to producer Robert 'Karate Kid' Kamen, 'the essence of the comic book. It starts with an explosion and has a violent or action sequence just about every four minutes. When the Punisher appears in a scene with another person, he kills him. When he's around a car or a building, he blows it up.'

EXTERNALISED LINGERIE

On the whole comics, with less money at stake, can simply *afford* to take more risks. Take 'Arkham Asylum', by British *wunderkinds* Grant Morrison and Dave McKean. According to some, it's one of the most visually ravishing and psychologically complex comics yet; but for some reason the boys at Warners were none too keen on its depiction of the Joker dressed like Madonna, externalised lingerie and all, taunting Batman about his relationship with Robin. To their credit, they have allowed publication to proceed this autumn at their subsidiary company DC Comics, but the Joker's costume has been changed. Even Warner Bros' own films can run into problems: Ron Howard's 'Clean and Sober' was originally due to open in London this month; the release has now been put back, perhaps because the image of Michael Keaton as a reformed alcoholic does not entirely fit with Batman's.

Before that, there was the DC readers' poll which, by a narrow margin, plumped for Robin to be killed off by the Joker in the comic. The decision startled editor Denny O'Neil by making front-page news around the world, but apparently it startled Warners even more. With millions tied up in merchandising of characters based on the film, Robin included (though he won't appear until the sequels), they ordered a resurrection.

If bands like the Rolling Stones can make a profit on tours from T-shirt sales alone, so too can a mega-budget flick like 'Batman' expect to recoup much of its outlay on action figurines, pillows, Batmobiles and the like. Take 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' (yes, honestly). Originally a cult, student-ish black-and-white comic, its action figures are now the best-selling in America, and among the top ten toys *period*. In LA, a car window was broken and though the stereo was untouched, the stuffed Turtle disappeared from the back seat. In Waco, Texas (yes, *honestly*), President Reagan was snubbed by the crowds who turned up instead for an autograph session with costumed Turtles (perhaps they couldn't tell the difference). So it should come as no surprise that 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles', already an animated TV series, is also being made into a live-action movie. It could be worse: at least 'Adolescent Radioactive Black Belt Hamsters' only rates a TV cartoon, while 'Pre-Teen, Dirty-Gene, Kung-Fu Kangaroos' has aroused even less Hollywood interest than 'Samurai Penguin' or 'Commando Koalas'. So whoever said all comics had to be adult and sophisticated?

In the movie, Batman's infamous utility belt is stuffed with hi-tech gadgetry, all of it highly marketable. There's a folding Batarang for throwing; a gun which fires a grappling hook and line, good for swinging along commando-style or for wrapping round the throats of villains; a time bomb, and a portable tracer and map. And instead of the boring Batcopter of the '60s feature film, there's a nifty new Batwing. But the best and potentially most lucrative prop of all is the Batmobile. Twenty feet long and six feet wide, it's sleek and streamlined and very scary. It still has afterburners at the rear, but there's also a bomb detector, a parachute kit and ejector seat, and a super-powerful machine gun which lifts out of the bonnet; the monitors and dials on the dashboard are taken from jet planes.

Designer Anton Furst looks proudly at his drawings. 'We went back to the salt flat speed machines of the '40s, and took

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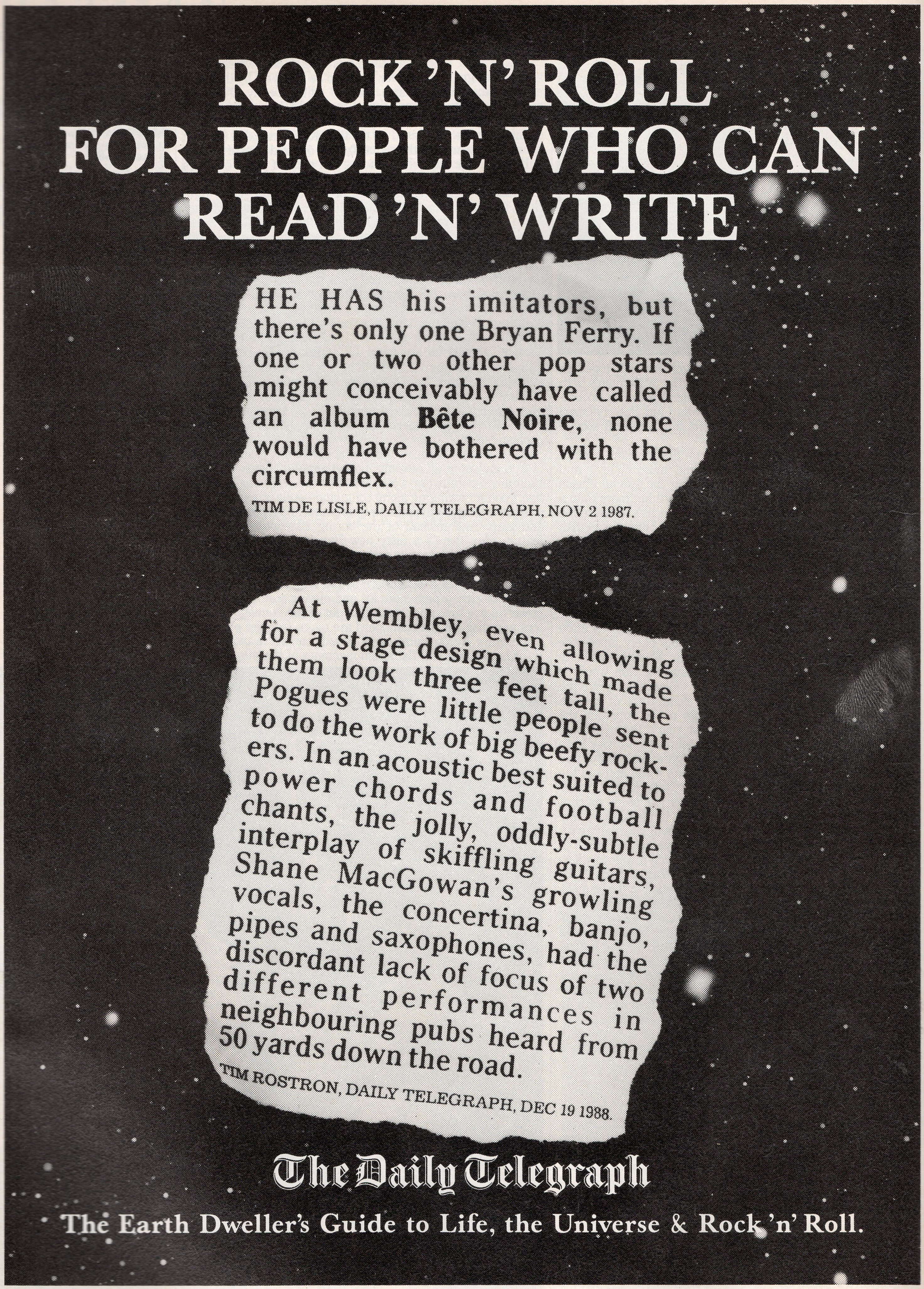
Left: Britain's own Judge Dredd, and the cybernetic 'RoboCop' Below: Heather Locklear makes out with muck in 'The Return of Swamp Thing', and the result of genetic experimentation in the bayou.



ROCK 'N' ROLL FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN READ 'N' WRITE

HE HAS his imitators, but there's only one Bryan Ferry. If one or two other pop stars might conceivably have called an album **Bête Noire**, none would have bothered with the circumflex.

TIM DE LISLE, DAILY TELEGRAPH, NOV 2 1987.

At Wembley, even allowing for a stage design which made them look three feet tall, the Pogues were little people sent to do the work of big beefy rockers. In an acoustic best suited to power chords and football chants, the jolly, oddly-subtle interplay of skiffling guitars, Shane MacGowan's growling vocals, the concertina, banjo, pipes and saxophones, had the discordant lack of focus of two different performances in neighbouring pubs heard from 50 yards down the road.

TIM ROSTRON, DAILY TELEGRAPH, DEC 19 1988.

The Daily Telegraph

The Earth Dweller's Guide to Life, the Universe & Rock 'n' Roll.

elements from the Stingrays of the '50s, and the Blackbird aircraft; we came up with just a brute force machine that didn't actually subscribe to any time period.' The result is the direct antithesis of what '60s Batman Adam West visualised last year when he was still hoping to land the role: 'I think in the final scenes of something, if it's bizarre and mysterious, you can still have Alfred the butler driving the old Batmobile to the rescue. In the picture we'd have been using all hi-tech, wonderful slick new stuff, so you wouldn't have seen it before, and at the critical moment, there's Alfred, driving the old Batmobile to the rescue. People would stand up and cheer, it's like the cavalry.'

WARPED PSYCHOLOGY

Opponents of camp might be alarmed to hear that Tim Burton phoned the Monty Python office while the film was in pre-production and asked for someone who could help re-write the script in a Python style (after 'Beetlejuice' co-writer Warren Skaaren had already had a go). But what Burton actually got was Charles McKeown, co-scripter of Terry Gilliam's bleak 'Brazil' and bizarre 'Baron Munchausen': 'Tim thinks I made it funnier and darker,' he says. And in one of those incestuous coincidences Hollywood is full of, the person whose script McKeown helped alter was Sam Hamm, who has written the 'Watchmen' script for Terry Gilliam to direct; not only that, Gilliam has just signed up 'Batman's' Anton Furst as production designer. And if you thought Batman had image problems, just wait until *this* film version swings into production . . .

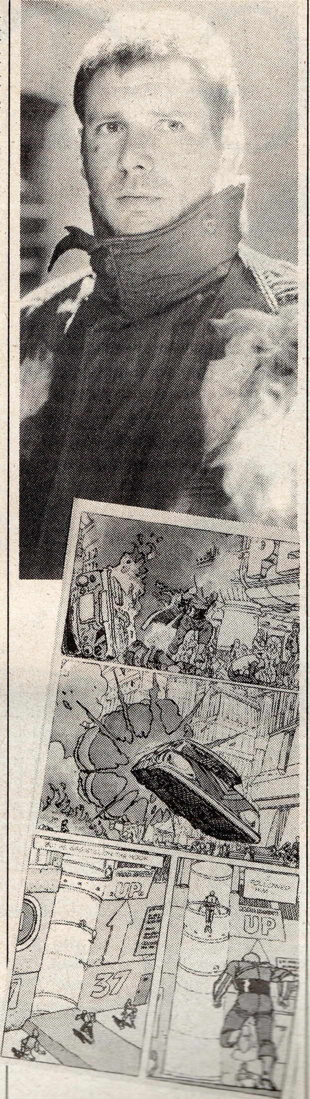
'The Watchmen', an epic, 500-page comic structured like a Chinese puzzle and investigating the warped psychology and sexuality of superheroes and the power politics that threaten nuclear armageddon, is the closest comics have ever come to great literature. 'We at 20th Century Fox are very high on the material,' says their Vice-President of Publicity, Eddie Egan. 'Terry Gilliam, since he is such a creative person, is attacking the script — and I don't use that word negatively — and we intend to start shooting in late summer or early autumn in London. Joel Silver, who's produced "Die Hard", "Predator" and the "Lethal Weapon" series, is known for getting the most bang for the buck, so how he works with Terry will be interesting. But with this kind of property, which is bound to be expensive, you don't want an R rating, you can't have anything but a PG-13. It's not censorship, just a question of return on investment.'

If anyone can successfully transfer 'The Watchmen's' rich visuals to the big screen, Gilliam can; but the content cannot but be impoverished. Sam Hamm explains: 'The problem that you obviously face when you try to translate it out of the medium of comics is that you can't do that. You don't have the same leisure to go back and forth to such great length. You can't do as many flashbacks. A great amount of stuff is going to have to be cut. The dilemma we face is having to take a post-modernistic, self-reflexive narrative and turn it into a more classical one. I feel like to attempt doing "Watchmen" at all for the movies is to betray "Watchmen".'

It's a reservation shared by Alan Moore himself, the Northampton-based writer who, aside from Frank 'Dark Knight' Miller, is the closest thing the comics world has to a major international talent. Unlike Miller, who is currently writing the script for 'RoboCop II', Moore has not given in to the temptations of Tinseltown, despite having been offered first crack at adapting 'The Watchmen' for the screen. Perhaps he's been soured by his one foray into films: Malcolm McLaren, who admired Moore's eco-fable 'Swamp Thing' so much he named an album after it, commissioned him three years ago to write 'Fashion Beast', a film merging the story of Beauty and the Beast with the life of fashion designer Christian Dior; but the project seems to have fallen victim to McLaren's notoriously short attention span.

'Swamp Thing' itself, however, has been made into a movie: 'The Return of Swamp Thing'. Return, because before Moore took over as writer on the comic, Wes Craven made a tongue-in-cheek screen version in 1982. Beauty and the Beast is, according to the producers, the core of the plot; and though it will have its quota of special-effects grotesques, courtesy of nasty genetic experimentation in the bayou, it's said to be played fairly straight. No doubt, though, the political, feminist, racist and ecological parables of Moore's original will be entirely lost.

Perhaps the best film version of this prolific writer's work can be expected from 'V for Vendetta', about a latter-day Guy Fawkes who spreads the gospel of anarchy in a totalitarian London of the 1990s. Like much of Moore's stuff it reads already like a storyboard, but is less text-heavy and requires minimal special effects. 'V for Vendetta' is now in development with the same producer as 'The Watchmen', Joel Silver, but unfortunately his office says his other comics films are taking precedence: 'Green Lantern' and 'Sgt Rock', starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and directed by John 'Die Hard' McTiernan, and, believe it or not, a live-action version of 'The Flintstones' starring Jim Belushi and Rick Moranis.



Harrison Ford as the 'Blade Runner', and the Moebius/Dan O'Bannon collaboration 'The Long Tomorrow' which served as a visual reference.

©TITAN BOOKS

It's heartening that Moore, a British writer, should generate so much Hollywood interest; and most of the technical crew on 'Batman' are Brits. But there's yet another rich source of filmic material: Britain's best-selling sci-fi comic, '2000AD', three strips from which have been picked up for production. The genetically engineered super-soldier 'Rogue Trooper' will be produced by the London-based Harley 'Dream Demons' Cokliss. '2000AD's' managing director, John Saunders, says Cokliss expects to have something up and going within 12 months; artist Dave Gibbons, who also drew 'The Watchmen', is acting as creative consultant. And just a few weeks ago an outline contract for an option on 'Robo Hunter', an early '2000AD' character, arrived from New Cinema in New York. But the big daddy of them all is the Judge Dredd film, optioned in 1982, the same year he graced *Time Out*'s cover, and running through all sorts of stars, locations and scripts ever since. Sylvester Stallone is often mentioned in connection with the role, which means we're talking *big* bucks; but the release of 'RoboCop', a character bearing a striking resemblance to the futuristic, helmeted lawman, put a spanner in the works.

Part of the problem is Judge Dredd's helmet: what major actor would agree to a role in which only his mouth is left uncovered? 'RoboCop' was permitted to remove his helmet for part of the film, but it's integral to Dredd's mystique and popularity that in 12 years he's never shown his real face. Producer Charles Lipincott has been quoted in America as saying, 'It's a tricky situation. You want to stay loyal . . . But we're talking now about not having his face covered with the mask throughout the movie.' That's news to MD John Saunders, who complains they never tell him anything; for him, as for most '2000AD' readers, removing Dredd's helmet is as unthinkable as removing Superman's underpants.

COMIC STRIP RIP-OFF

'RoboCop' is not the first film to plunder comic books for ideas; it's been going on since the beginning of science-fiction. Dan O'Bannon, who scripted 'Dark Star' for John Carpenter and made his directorial début on 'Return of the Living Dead', is convinced that Ridley Scott ripped off a comic strip of his to make 'Blade Runner'. The strip was 'The Long Tomorrow', and it was drawn by Europe's most celebrated comic artist, Moebius. Moebius agrees, but without rancour. He's worked directly on a number of film projects, including Ridley Scott's 'Alien', and indirectly his designs have found their way into countless others (check the top panel on page 11 of the same Dan O'Bannon collaboration, published by Titan Books, and you'll find an exact replica of the Imperial Space Probe three years before 'The Empire Strikes Back' was made).

The Yugoslavian/French illustrator Enki Bilal says, 'It's true. For years Hollywood producers and directors have had comic books lying around on their coffee tables.' And now that top comics shop Forbidden Planet has opened a branch in LA, a few weeks ago, they're having to turn the John Carpenters of this world away at the door. But Bilal, less philosophical than Moebius, has decided to beat them at their own game. He has just finished directing a major feature film in his home town of Belgrade, with a top-notch cast including Maria 'butter wouldn't melt in her . . .' Schneider, Miou-Miou and François Truffaut's alter-ego, Jean-Pierre Léaud.

So far only one director is attempting to repay the collective debt to graphic art. Clive Barker, currently directing 'Hellraiser II' in London, and a long-standing believer that the only horror-writer who could hold a candle to him was not Stephen King but Alan Moore, has chosen several top-notch artists to turn his 1984 series of short stories, 'Books of Blood', into a series of comic books. Entitled 'Tapping The Vein', they will be published bimonthly from the end of the month. His own draughtsmanship, every bit as disturbing as his writing, can be found in Steve Bissette's 'Taboo', and 'Fly In My Eye'.

Perhaps the best indication of the shape of things to come is Japan, ever ahead of the Western world, where comics are outstripping books as well as commanding a huge chunk of the film industry. Here a samurai strip like 'Lone Wolf & Cub' — optioned in the US by major producer Edward Pressman — is treated with as much reverence as Kurosawa's swordsmen, and arguments about artistic merit have long since become redundant. Certainly, 'Batman' promises to be the action pic of the year; but as you thrill to the fight scenes, the psychodramas, the Prince soundtrack, think of checking out the comics, every bit as fantastical, that inspired the film. ☐

With thanks to Comics Scene, Starlog *and* Speakeasy *magazines.*

'Batman' is scheduled to open in London on August 11.

PAYING TO WIN

BOB THOMAS

Time was when sport was a game, and gentlemanly with it; now British pros have caught a severe case of agents. *Is sport overdue a drastic reassessment on commercial and career priorities, and will it mean the top dollar* prima donna-*isms of pop and film translating to the playing field?* Geoff Brown *meets the man behind Maradona.*

BY GEOFF BROWN

'It used to be wives that affected players, now it's the agents. They don't know about the game and are not in love with it.' Thus Bobby Gould, manager of Wimbledon FC, whose players have, since reaching the FA Cup Final last year, been involved in some less than edifying spectacles in the name of self or product promotion. Unfortunately for Mr Gould and other football club managers, from whom we shall hear later, sports agents — or advisers as the more respectable of them prefer to be called — feel otherwise. 'We are a legitimate business practice,' says Jon Smith, chairman of First Artists Corporation and a slew of associated other companies, 'performing a good function. You wouldn't expect Frank Bruno to fix his own fights or Paul McCartney to arrange a tour so why should a footballer not have representation? Agent-managers are a fact of life and we're not going to go away.'

Just as sports participation is the leisure industry's fastest growing sector, so spectator sports are a huge attraction in entertainment, particularly when the army of armchair TV spectators is added to attendances at stadia, grounds and indoor arenas. Money from the turnstiles, money from TV coverage, money from sponsors, money from equipment endorsements, money from TV and Press interviews, money from personal appearances, signing on fees and, of course, money from playing the chosen game. Money is raining on almost all sports.

A while ago Graham Taylor, now manager of Aston Villa, offered me the opinion that 'It's all a question of greed. More, more, more from all quarters — players, managers, reporters, supporters, agents — all of the time. The biggest bone of contention is agents representing [a player] on an individual basis in what is essentially a team game. I am not against agents but I am against agents looking after an individual to the exclusion of colleagues. Football is a team situation. Within that team there will always be individuals but outside influences are such that the only thing that individuals now concern themselves about is precisely themselves. What's in it for them. And that's not just players but people in my job as well.'

Arsenal manager George Graham offered an even blunter view. 'I don't deal with agents. That's a club policy since I've come in. I don't expect agents to run around in January and February when it's snowing and it's mucky so I don't expect them to tell me what a player's going to be worth. The player's going to do the work, he does the negotiating. Whether he wants to go off and talk to his agent afterwards, that's entirely up to him. But when somebody actually works for me I expect him to settle things and thrash it out face-to-face with me.'

SHARKS ABOUND

Sports agents — or investment and marketing advisers — have been established in the USA for considerably longer than in Britain and it is a matter of concern that, despite a large number of reputable operators, sharks abound and there is no national regulatory body to control them. The 'daddy' of sports agents is Mark McCormack, an American amateur golfer who in the '60s befriended Arnold Palmer, became his business adviser and made him a fortune off-the-course to complement the millions Palmer won on it. McCormack's company, International Management Group, has since grown into a multinational which guides the careers of many of the top international golfers and tennis players *and* promotes the events in which they compete against each other *and* against performers from outside the IMG stable. This sounds like as good a definition of conflict of interest as I'll ever hear. Not for nothing is McCormack's book 'What They Don't Tell You At Harvard Business School' regarded as a sports impresario's bible on how to shaft the opposition.

Apparent conflicts of interest in USA sports administration abound. In ice hockey, for instance, players' union leader Alan Eagleson was also both a players' agent *and* a promoter, the basketball players' union leader, Larry Fleisher, represented some players as agent, and in pro ten-pin bowling lawyer/player Gary Holthus helped market the 'tour' and was agent to bowlers against whom he might be competing. Nothing quite so convoluted has reared its head in this country yet — nor has an athlete like the great basketball player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar been so thoroughly ill-advised by his business manager (one Tom Collins) that he has filed a suit for $59m (yep, *fifty-nine million* dollars) in damages. No wonder Kareem continued playing past his 40th birthday.

At present, business advisers to British sports stars can *probably* only make the star's lot better. How many times have we read of a soccer player on his uppers, the pub he bought or business he invested in having gone bust and here he is taking a couple of hundred greasy quid from a tabloid for the pleasure of publishing his glum tale?

REGULATORY BODY

Although there are undoubtedly unscrupulous men involved in marketing and promoting British sports and in giving financial advice to players, there is a core who are putting their businesses on a proper footing. Jon Smith is one of them. A well-groomed, young 36, Smith thinks there are good agents in the country but recent publicity has attracted many more which is a worry. I've proposed a number of times there being a regulatory body for agents. I think it will happen. It should be made onerous. There should be a bond of £25-£50,000 to be put up to join and if you misbehave you'll lose that.'

We're actually into the second generation of sports 'advisers' in Britain. Dennis Roach, who recalls swapping bruises with current Sheffield Wednesday manager Ron Atkinson when playing for Bedford against Kettering in the Southern League, was involved in negotiations on the lucrative contracts which took Trevor Francis, Liam Brady, Mark Hateley and Mark Hughes to play on the Continent and which took Terry Venables to manage Barcelona. Harry Swales, the man who helped Kevin Keegan cash in on his marketable personality after Keegan had diligently maximised his potential on the pitch, ultimately took over as financial adviser to the England squad. Now, younger men are in the ring. Nottingham-based agent Jon Holmes has kept the off-the-pitch careers of England and Barcelona striker Gary Lineker and England and Leicestershire batsman/captain David Gower in the black, though the sportsmen themselves have not always been able to keep themselves in the First or International XIs. Sportsmen like European and Commonwealth 400m hurdles gold medallist Alan Pascoe and Scottish international full-back David Hay have brought a performer's knowledge to business dealings. Pascoe's company, APA, has been in existence for four-and-a-half years and quickly won this country's major athletics deal — the £5m contract, now in its final year, to market British athletics.

Smith, if my impression is correct, could soon be doing *very* big business with soccer globally. He negotiates deals on behalf of the great Napoli and Argentine star Diego Maradona, who 'fell into our lap' by a piece of good fortune — Diego rang his friend Ossie Ardiles bemoaning his business affairs, and Smith just happened to be at Ardiles's house that evening. Smith now has an office in Buenos Aires, will represent the Argentinian World Cup players next year, is setting up pre-World Cup tours for Chile and Uruguay and represents the World Club Champions, Nacional of Montevideo. And that is just South America. He has just bought Gunter Bachmann's sports management group with head offices in Frankfurt to have a solid central European base for 1992 and has offices ready to open in New York so he'll be up and running in the USA long before the 1994 World Cup there.

In Britain, he is business adviser to the England squad, to Liverpool, Celtic and Rangers, and has assisted Peter Beardsley and Tony Cottee in their £1m-plus moves from, respectively, Newcastle to Liverpool and West Ham to Everton. He has been in the business of sports management scarcely four years.

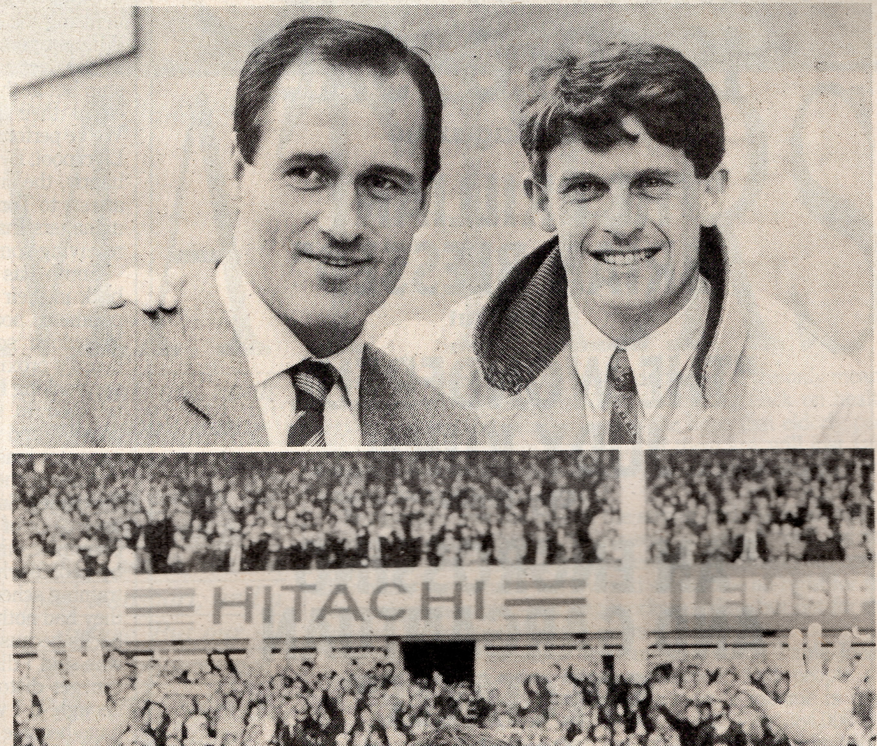
WIGAN'S CHOSEN FEW

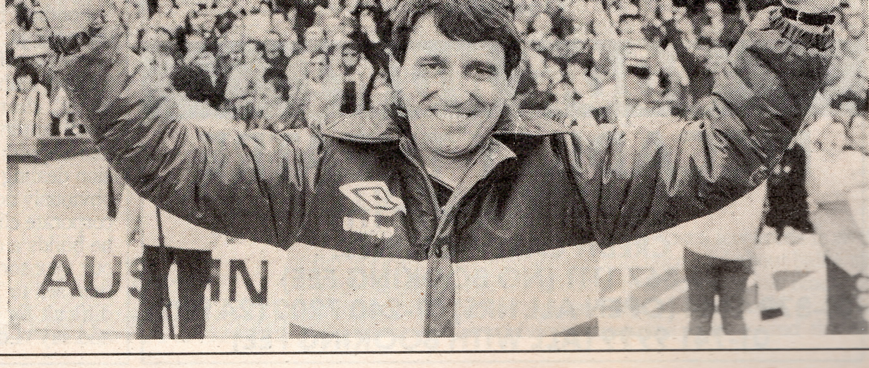
In the '70s, Smith had a record production and publishing company working with acts as diverse as The Band Of The Black Watch and quasi-Northern soul acts such as Wigan's Chosen Few, Wigan's Ovation and Tommie Hunt. Towards the end of that decade his wife became seriously ill so when he was offered a good price for his company he sold it in order to spend more time caring for her. Unfortunately, she died soon after and Smith spent 18 months 'at the bottom of a bottle of whisky, every day' but made some money in property, built up a portfolio and sold it last year. Meanwhile, during a stay 'away from it all' in the USA he'd seen a news item about the dissolution of the Dustin Hoffman/Barbra Streisand joint project First Artist Corporation. After the one year non-use prescribed by American law he acquired rights to the defunct company's name. What to do with it? After music his other love was sport. 'It's entertainment whether you're looking after a footballer, a ballet dancer, Cliff Richard or Frank Bruno. Bruno's the ideal example, such a marketable quantity. Whether he's a good boxer or not is nearly immaterial now.'

On a trip back to England he met an old friend, Tony Woodcock, then at Arsenal, and through him Paul Mariner. They became good mates. Mariner, now a co-director, had similar ideas to Smith about the marketing of sport and sports personalities. In the middle of '86 Smith decided they should set up shop. A week later, while they were interviewing marketing and financial staff to build a small organisation able to look after players finances, Harry Swales announced he was giving up managing the England players' financial pool. 'We put together a really good financial package because Paul Mariner had told me some years back they'd had a lot of problems with VAT. In those days the Inland Revenue didn't know how to tax a players' pool, it had no legal identity. Also, it was no good saying we could get sponsors and "sell the England team". My dog could do it.'

So by the time the company was five weeks old it had won 'possibly the biggest sports account in the country'. The space allotted to the England team in the nationals, even at the team's current low ebb, is phenomenal. 'When England meet on a Sunday to Wednesday I'm in a position where, in the nicest possible way, I can manipulate the media.' For instance, during the disastrous European Championships Peter Shilton won his hundredth cap against Holland and posed in a 'One Hundred And Still Going Strong' sweatshirt, the emphasis on 'Strong' publicising sponsors Trebor Extra Strong Mints. Ev-

Clockwise from Main Pic: Jon Smith, Peter Beardsley and the former's Bentley; 'daddy' of all sports agents Mark McCormack; Arsenal manager George Graham; Aston Villa manager Graham Taylor; Napoli and Argentina star Diego Maradona; £2m-plus Tony Cottee.





SYNDICATION INTERNATIONAL

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Wimbledon boss Bobby Gould in the vice-like of Vinny Jones.

SYNDICATION INTERNATIONAL

ery national newspaper used the picture. It would have cost Trebor £800,000 to buy that space. He wouldn't say what Trebor paid into the England squad pool but 'it was significantly less'.

After England came Peter Beardsley and almost immediate speculation that having signed to Smith's company he'd be moving to one of the big five clubs or abroad. 'We looked at Peter, we packaged him, we got his finances right, his mortgage, his insurance, his pensions, his house, gardener, anything and everything. So Sandra [his wife] can look after the house and Peter can play football.' But it wouldn't work with anyone, says Smith. 'No other agents can do this because there's not a lot of money in representing footballers unless you've got the biggest and the best.'

GOLDEN EGG

The golden egg named Maradona finally set the company on its feet. Loss-making for 18 months, First Artists Corporation now ploughs profits back into infrastructure like new £300,000 offices opposite Wembley Stadium but he expects assets and transient business to form a basis for company flotation in two or three years.

'My philosophy is very simple. I don't see why a major performer, someone who entertains millions of people on television every week, should not be treated the same as a pop performer, a motor racing driver, a film star, a boxer. Why shouldn't they? What makes the footballer this isolated figure that mustn't be touched by professional management? For a long time [clubs] have been able to pick them up at 17, 18, and sign them on an onerous contract. The PFA have helped a number of players at the higher and lower levels but the clubs have still been able to say "You're playing for us, that's it".'

Previously, he says, agents were akin to backstreet doctors working in a way which attracted the wrong people and not befitting the stature of the star. 'We've taken it from a totally different perspective. Don't forget, in the last 18 months we've raised over £2m for sport in this country in terms of sponsorship but at the end of the day we've taken the very best, we've eased their life, we've professionalised their whole being. We've performed a legitimate service. You speak to Newcastle, Liverpool, Everton, West Ham. The club's happy, the player's happy, the situation is just.' A plaque on Smith's windowsill attests to Tony Cottee's pleasure at his new situation. 'A lot of managers that come out and castigate us,' he said later, 'are receiving some nice little deals themselves.'

Smith has several Maradona stories. The best goes way back in their association and concerns sponsors who booked perimeter boards advertising their wares around the pitch. Maradona scores and, celebrating wildly, he runs to the board's proximity in the sure knowledge that the TV cameras are tracking him. 'Back in Argentina, before we were involved, he used to score and have to look around, "Where's the board?!" and you'd see him belt 60 yards down the pitch for no apparent reason!'

Among the Press and despite 'working on a rapport' with the dailies, Smith as England's financial manager says even he 'took a lot of stick for the poor performance in the European Championships!'. The daily Press and photo calls, demanded by people who'd later attack him, 'never detracted from their training schedules, it was always done in the afternoon when they had nothing to do. And in a way it kept the Press off their backs because we were always giving them something. But it was said I distracted them [the players]. That's how easily it can get distorted. I was blamed. I'm actually not important enough. If I was Mark McCormack and not Jon Smith it may have become an issue because I was a soft target.'

Football, he says, 'has a nasty habit of taking its underpants off in public. It really has got to organise itself as a professional operation. If I ran my business like some people ran their football clubs I'd be bust.' Smith, a strong believer in 'market forces', clearly has no intention of letting this happen to the small empire he is building. He's about half-way finished. He has a sports management company for individuals and a division dealing with corporate accounts and sponsorships. These obviously dovetail — for example, the players wear or use the corporate clients' products. 'The next obvious thing,' and here he builds a castle in the air with his hands, 'is we start to get our sponsors to sponsor our artists in their own events and then sell to TV and suddenly we're a largish plc and it's very difficult for the manager of Manchester United to turn round and say "I don't like dealing with those sort of people".'☐

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN LEIGHTON

GREY MATTERS

The wants and needs of London's elderly seem lost in the escalating war of the fit and young for homes, health, wealth, jobs, transport, and a future. But our elders' concerns are vital, and should be ours, and their numbers are rising rapidly.

BY CHRIS TAGGART

There are 1,200,000 elderly people in London, people over retirement age. Some are wealthy; many are poor. But as a group they are among the worst treated in the capital.

It's not just that many of them live in some of the worst accommodation in the city, though they do.

It's not just that many of them rely on inadequate and badly run public transport, though they do.

It's not just that most of them have to make do with a health service that's increasingly designed for people with private health insurance.

No, it's not just these things, it's that the financiers, businessmen and developers who increasingly run London have no time for them. At best they're a nuisance: people who get in the way, who can't walk quickly enough, who won't move out of the flat they've rented for the last 15 years to make way for redevelopment. At worst they're a drain on society's resources and momentum, a drag on this utopian, designer city we're building.

Forget the fact that these are the people who gave 20, 30, 40 years or more of their working lives to the city. Forget the fact that they worked, lived, and shopped in Covent Garden, Soho, Battersea, and Docklands before most of the Porsche-before-25 brigade were even conceived.

Forget that they paid taxes and national insurance, built up the health service, created the welfare state. Forget all this. London has. Why else would we be cutting back on a public transport system that is for most elderly people the only means of transport? Why else would we be cutting back on health services, closing hospitals, if not in the hope that elderly people, like the old soldiers that many of them are, will just fade away? And why else allow so many of our older citizens to be abused, harassed, and ignored?

The healthy and the infirm, the strong and the weak are all treated the same: they're all classed as retired, 'old', on the scrap heap. The concept of retirement as a well-deserved break after many years' hard work would seem to be all right for the personal pension plan-carrying workers today, but not for the National Insurance-paying workers of yesterday.

Perhaps the situation is best summed up by Paula Jones, director of Age Concern Greater London: 'Old people are amongst the poorest Londoners. Inadequate income is their biggest problem. Social isolation is acute with 384,000 old people living alone. They are immobilised by a public transport system which is inaccessible and hostile. They live in some of the worst housing conditions in London. Perhaps worst of all, they suffer from other people's negative attitudes. It won't be until ageist attitudes change that older people's needs will be rightfully prioritised.'

BARE CONCRETE STEPS

Nell Williams lives in Covent Garden, just a few yards from the flat in Drury Lane in which she was born, and about half a mile from the piazza. Her flat is on the first floor and you reach it by a flight of bare concrete steps. There's no bathroom — she has to give herself a washdown from the sink — and the only

Income

Basic pensions are at present £43.60 for a single pensioner, £69.80 for a couple. The average male full-time gross weekly earnings in London in 1988 were £312.80.

Forty-six per cent of pensioner households depend on state pensions and benefits for at least 75 per cent of their income.

Only 45 per cent of Asian elders receive a state pension.

In 1986, 240,000 pensioners in London, one-fifth of the total, claimed supplementary benefit. The year before, a third of pensioners nationally who were entitled to supplementary benefit did not claim it.

Living Conditions

In 1985, 24 per cent of households in London headed by people aged 65-74 and 29 per cent of those headed by people aged 75 and over were in an unsatisfactory condition (in a serious state of disrepair, declared unfit by environmental health officers, or lacking one or more basic amenity). And 43,000 pensioner households in London lacked basic amenities.

In 1985, 22 per cent of pensioner owner-occupiers, 15 per cent of pensioners renting in the public sector and 56 per cent of pensioners renting in the private sector were living in unsatisfactory conditions.

Approximately 35,000 aged over 75 live in residential care homes and long-stay hospital wards in London.

In 1986, there were 147,000 households with a person over 60 in need of specially designed or adapted accommodation.

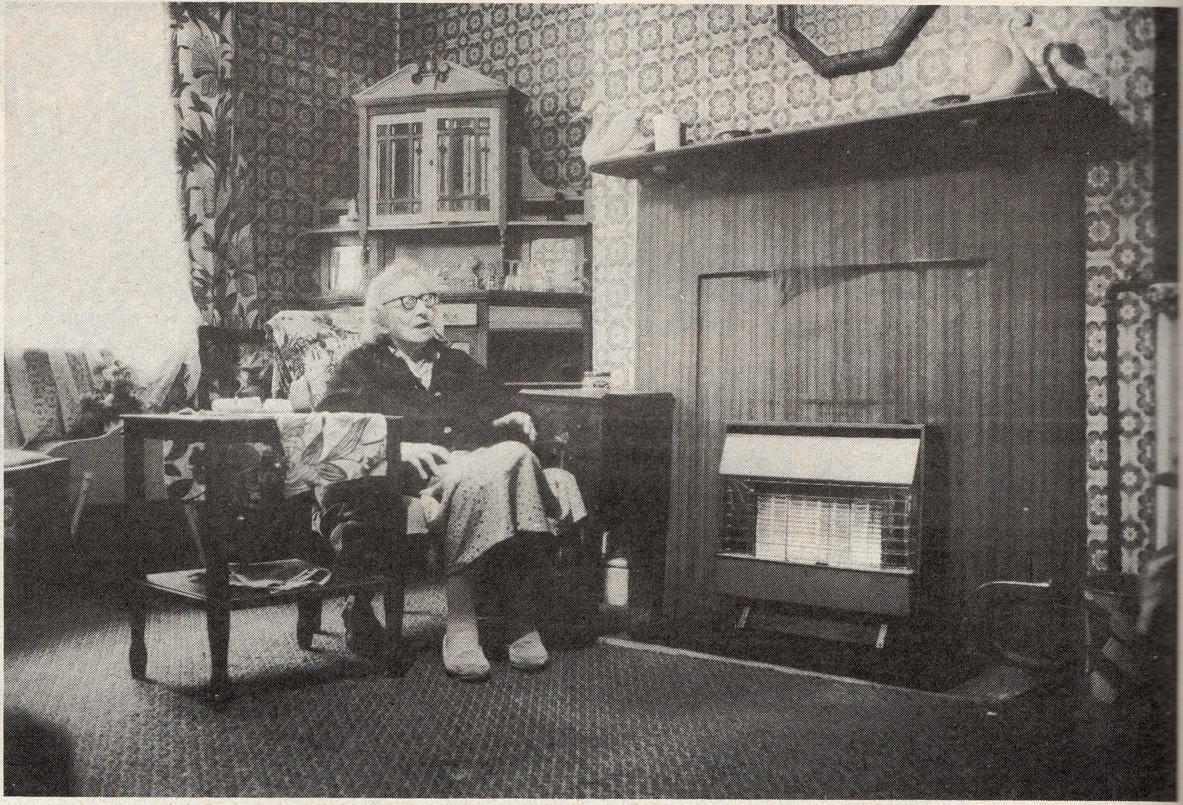
In 1981 362,000, almost a third, of retired Londoners lived alone. Of these, 293,000 were women and 69,000 were men. 35 per cent of retired Londoners spend most or all of their time on their own — double that of the rest of the population.

Health

Every year in London between 2,000 and 5,000 more people aged over 60 die in the winter months than in the summer.

In a survey of London's older population, 28 per cent of older people had been ill in the previous two weeks and 36.5 per cent said that health troubles had limited what activities they carried out in their home.

It was estimated in 1986 that between 5 and 7 per cent of people in London over 65 suffered from senile dementia.



Above: Nell Williams has lived in her Covent Garden flat since before the war.

sources of heat in this cold flat are one small gas and one small electric fire. She's lived here since before the war — used to shelter underneath these solid steps when the air raids were on. She's fallen down them a few times recently, now that she's not quite so steady on her feet and doesn't see so well. 'Tough as old boots, me,' she jokes.

Her failing eyesight means that she needs someone to walk with her to the Age Concern Centre in Covent Garden, to help her avoid the roadworks, the motorbikes parked on the pavements, the crowds of rushing people. She can remember when the block which now houses the centre used to be a print works — Odhams. It printed the *Daily Herald*. The whole area was completely different then. Covent Garden's famous fruit and veg market used to set up in the early hours of the morning, so there was always something going on.

Talk to Nell, or any of the other elderly people in the area, and they'll tell you it's never been the same since the market left. The atmosphere, the traders, the community. Still, they'd much rather have it as it is today than when the place fell into disrepair in the years following the market's move to Nine Elms. All the same . . .

Come the evening and Nell will be safely in her flat, locked up, admitting no one. Outside, the streets are still bustling with people from all over the place; from all over London and the rest of the world, but not from Covent Garden. They're here for a good night out, to splash out a bit. It doesn't really matter that the beer in the pubs is a bit expensive or there's nowhere to sit. Why should it concern them that there's barely a grocer, butcher, baker, laundrette, or ordinary shoe shop in the whole area. It certainly doesn't matter to them that there's been no supermarket in the area since the Sainsbury's on Drury Lane closed down.

But it matters to the people who live in Covent Garden, many of whom are working-class pensioners. It matters a lot to them.

In fact, Nell has a home help who does her shopping and she also has some help from the mission on Endell Street. But things haven't been easy for her for a while now. Her first husband, 'my only love', died when he was 42, and her second husband, whom she married more for company, needed a lot of care before he died. After her daughter's death a couple of years ago, her friends at the Age Concern centre and at the mission became even more important.

In spite of all this, she's fairly happy, and has many good times to look back on. Of course, it would be nice after all these years if she had a bathroom; it would be nice if the flat weren't so cold in winter; it would be nice if she didn't have to shut herself in at night, answering the door to no one.

Westmead House is one of Westminster Council's nine residential homes for elderly people. Situated just off the Harrow Road, it is purpose-built and has 50 residents. As you walk through the door, there is a distinct though not overpowering smell, a much milder version of the odour of hospitals. After a few seconds you no longer notice it.

For most of the residents this is now their home. They will be here till they die. The staff are clearly very concerned for the well-being of the residents, and the facilities, only 14 years old, are quite good, although not all residents have their own rooms. All have mobility problems — ranging from dizziness to being in a wheelchair — and some also are a little confused or have difficulty with remembering things or with communication.

Arthur Austin has hearing difficulties and needs help with walking. He came to Westmead after his flat burnt down. As he tells it, he was on his way home with the shopping, having had bad luck all day, when he saw there was a fire nearby. He decided to delay a bit and go and enjoy the fire, only to find it was his own house. Once he found that his wife had been rescued, he sat down across the street and watched his home going up in smoke. He's now on his own, his wife having recently died and it is clear that he sometimes finds life difficult without her.

INDEPENDENCE AND DIGNITY

There is a wide mix of personalities at Westmead, from the outgoing and jovial to the very reserved, and though the atmosphere is generally warm, their characters sometimes sit a little uneasily side by side.

Most, if not all, of the residents are very happy at Westmead. They have the care that they need, they have security and each other's company. And if their lives revolve around the home, that's perhaps not so surprising. Certainly, to integrate them back into the 'community' in any way would take a great deal of resources. Yet you can't help feeling that people like Arthur would prefer the independence and dignity of his own place.

Perhaps more pensioners, given the opportunity, could be like Anne de Graf. She's 80 years old, lives in Lewisham and is having the time of her life in her retirement. Anne married young only to have her husband taken ill with an illness which confined her to the role of nurse for 14 years. When he died she began work at Sainsbury's, travelling around the country for them as a relief housekeeper. Though she enjoyed the work, she was happy to retire and begin what she calls her 'travels'. Austria, Switzerland, Holland, travelling alone or with a friend; she recounts her trips with pleasure.

She met her second husband, a Dutchman, at a train station, 'Brief Encounter'-style. He offered to carry her bags, she refused. He offered again and by the time she got to the platform the train had gone and they shared a coffee before the next train. They married after a four-year courtship — she was 67, he was 71. He bought a brand-new motorbike and the two of them went riding around the South of England on it. When he died recently, Anne was shattered. On her first visit to Lewisham Age Concern's skill centre she was 'a very depressed-

looking widow'. Within a short time she'd gone on a tour round Europe, had a holiday romance with a man of just 63, and was fully back on form. The centre is a great mixture of types and ages, with the aim of passing on skills — anything from the traditional knitting and cake decoration to car maintenance and languages — from elderly people on to school children. It's also an enjoyable way of young and old mixing and swapping stories.

It's a lot of fun talking to Anne. A bit of a flirt, she reminds you of the elderly ball of fire in 'Harold And Maude'. 'I do everything I can do. I don't reckon that anything is out of my scope. I want to *live* until I die.'

Anne's is perhaps an ideal retirement. For her it's been a release, a chance to try new things, go to new places. Go along to say, Islington Pensioners' Link, where they produce their own pensioners' magazine, and you will find other such people: active, eager to try new things, determined. And it's meeting such people that really puts paid to the idea of elderly people as 'finished', or 'of no use'.

But sadly, for some elderly people being a pensioner has become more about paying bills, avoiding loneliness, staying safe, keeping warm. It's not easy doing that on a state pension. When they fail, it's usually from the social services that help comes first.

RAPED AND ROBBED

Lambeth's social services department Area 2 covers some fairly rough and run-down estates. Stockwell Park Estate, which includes two blocks of sheltered accommodation, has a particularly hard reputation, although the home helps who visit elderly people there say it isn't quite as bad as it's made out to be. The area has 60 home helps serving 480 clients, mostly poor, working-class and in council accommodation. This is the sharp end of the social services.

A couple of weeks ago, an elderly woman on one of the estates in the area was raped and robbed. She'd already been robbed once before, quite recently. According to her home help, she's now been moved to a different flat and is starting to recover, although it's difficult to imagine a complete recovery from such trauma.

A more frequent problem, especially for those with severe mobility difficulties, is isolation. If they have no family in the area, it is easy for them to get lonely or depressed, for their lives to lose their quality.

John, for example, lives on one of the estates. He's travelled all over the world: Australia, in whose army he served in Borneo; Africa; the Bahamas. Though he's got the mind of a young man, he's recently had a stroke and now has breathing problems. He now doesn't get out much.

The experiences of elderly people in London are as varied as those of their younger counterparts. In some cases, it's feasible for elderly people to move in with their children. Helen Aspey, secretary of Lambeth Pensioners Action Group, is in just such a position. She's very aware of how fortunate she is, having moved in with her daughter after retirement meant she had to leave her tied accommodation.

And there are still a number of geriatric wards left. Foxfield Ward in St Pancras Hospital has 17 residents. This, at the moment, is the optimum number. Any more and the staff would not be able to care properly for the residents; any fewer and they would lose a member of staff. The staff here clearly take their jobs very seriously, and care deeply for the elderly people in their charge. However, it still *feels* very much like part of a hospital, with no separate rooms and that slightly spartan look. The residents' needs vary quite considerably; some need a great deal of attention. There's plenty to keep everybody occupied and there's a genuinely pleasant atmosphere. The big problem here, as in many London hospitals, is shortage of staff. One of the main goals of the nurses on Foxfield is to build up personal relationships with the residents; clearly this is impossible when agency nurses have to be used.

Traditional thinking used to have it that black and ethnic communities looked after their own elders. In fact, this was more often down to inadequacies in the way they were dealt with by existing services, than any firm tradition. Places such as the Brixton Neighbourhood Community Centre and the Camden Chinese Community Centre started lunch clubs and provided advice for the elderly, services which weren't offered by existing agencies.

The same problems occur. The pension is inadequate; dealing with the councils or the Department of Social Security is such a nightmare that many would rather not bother; the health service has fallen apart; and young people have no time for them — this is particularly true where the elders are non-English-speaking and where their children or grandchildren have grown up in a Western tradition.

But if elderly people get a raw deal now, how much worse will the situation be in ten years' time. Ignoring, for the moment, any continued drop in services, the demand for those services looks set to increase rapidly. Although the total number of people over retirement age in London is projected to drop to just over a million by the year 2000, the number of people over the age of 85 will increase by 40 per cent to over 110,000. It is precisely these people who, as a group, require most care. In addition, the number of pensioners from black or ethnic minority groups will rise from 30,000 at present to 250,000 — a quarter of London's pensioners — by the year 2000.

Whether in the form of hospital treatment, day-care centres, full-time nursing care or simply a little more time to get on and off the bus, extra resources will certainly be needed. Who would dare predict that the political and commercial climate will change to such an extent that pensioners get them? ☐

TRANSPORT

In 1981, 78 per cent of pensioner households had no car, compared with 38 per cent of other households.

About 340,000 of London's pensioners are handicapped in their use of public transport. Of these, 35 per cent cannot walk a quarter of a mile without severe discomfort, 66 per cent find normal activities restricted by getting tired or breathless, 38 per cent cannot climb up and down stairs without resting, and 47 per cent had been transport handicapped for more than five years.

EDUCATION

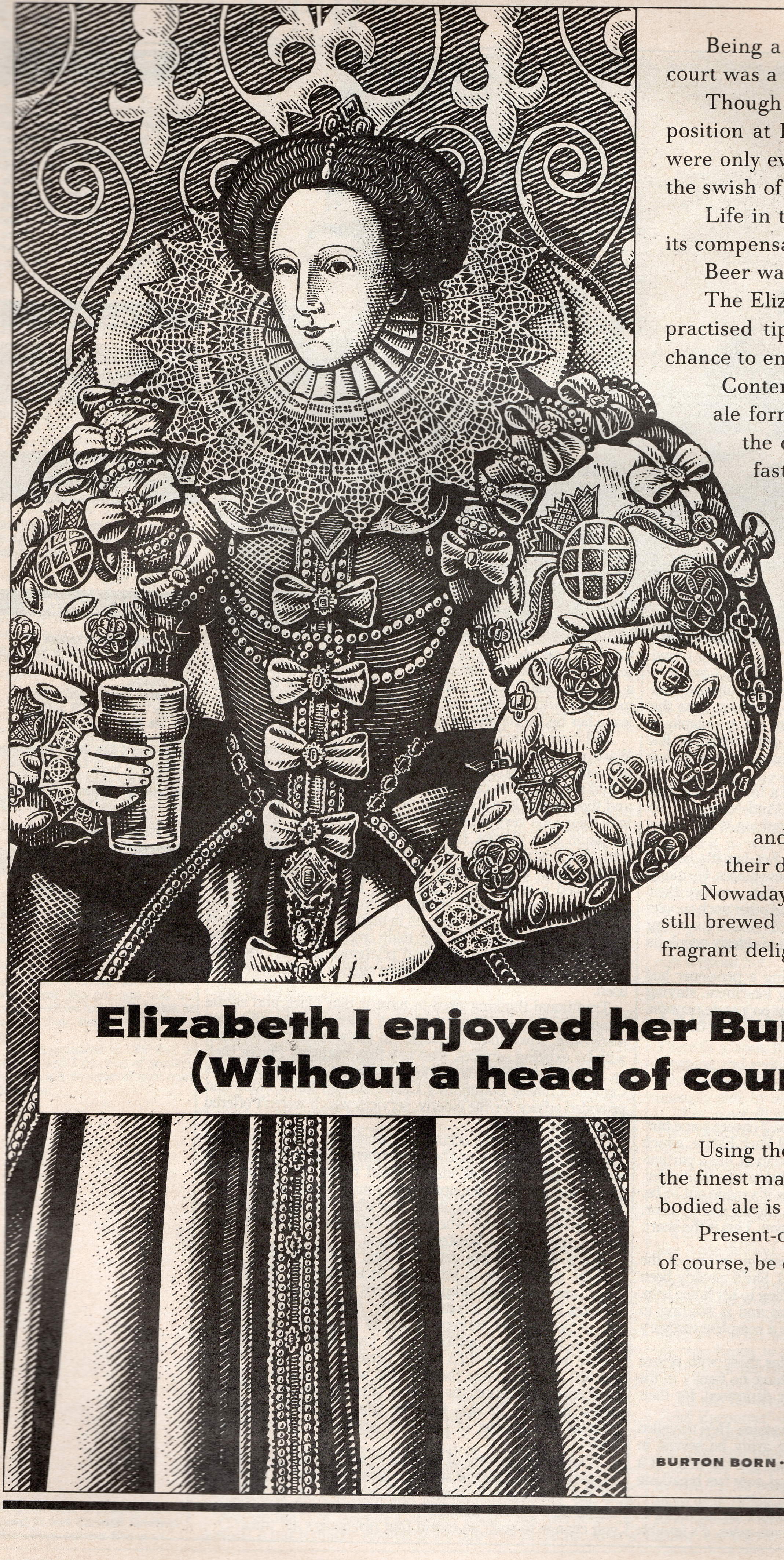
8 per cent of people over retirement age in Inner London are engaged in adult education. In 1982, the national figure was two per cent. When ILEA disappears in April 1990, there will be no coherent structure for adult education in London.

BANK MANAGERS

A survey found that retiring bank managers died within an average of 18 months if they didn't take up other work or activities.

ORGANISATIONS

Age Concern Greater London *54 Knatchbull Road, London SE5 9QY (737 3456) See phone book for local groups.*
Pensioners' Link *17 Balfe Street, London N1 9EB (278 5501).*
Help The Aged *St James's Walk, London EC1R 0BE (253 0253).*
London Dial-A-Ride Users' Association *St Margaret's, 25 Leighton Road, London NW5 2QD (482 2325).*
Age Exchange Theatre *15 Camden Row, Blackheath, London SE3 0QA (318 9105).*
Asian Sheltered Residential Accommodation *5-5a Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7XW (679 7758).*
Standing Conference of Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens *5 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7XW (928 0095).*



Being a member of the Elizabethan court was a pretty serious affair.

Though one might occupy an exalted position at Her Majesty's side, you were only ever one careless remark from the swish of the axeman's blade.

Life in the court did, however, have its compensations.

Beer was one.

The Elizabethans, it seems, were practised tipplers, and rarely missed a chance to enjoy 'that honest drink.'

Contemporary records show that ale formed a substantial part of the diet and was drunk at breakfast time by even the noblest of people.

None were more noble than great Elizabeth herself.

The Queen, we learn, was a most discerning drinker and made public her liking for the good ale of Burton.

Her courtiers too, keen to keep her favour and keep their heads were happy to sup the royal pint, and accepted the ale as part of their daily allowance.

Nowadays, Ind Coope's Burton Ale is still brewed in the same style as that fragrant delight of the Elizabethan table.

Elizabeth I enjoyed her Burton ale. (Without a head of course.)

Using the famous Burton water and the finest malt and hops, this strong, full-bodied ale is a classic amongst beers.

Present-day Burton Ale drinkers will, of course, be expected to keep their heads.

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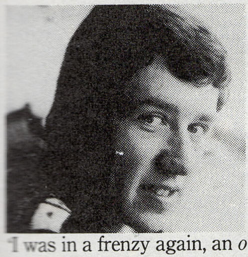
THE WEEK'S NEW MOVIES, MUSIC, THEATRE, BOOKS, SPORT & ART

PREVIEW

FILM GEOFF ANDREW ON FELLINI **SPORT** DON PERRETTA ON THE LONDON MARATHON **MUSIC** LAURA LEE DAVIES ON THE WEDDING PRESENT **BOOKS** STEVE GRANT ON MURDER MOST FOUL **CABARET** MALCOLM HAY ON JOHN HEGLEY **ART** ROBERT MACDONALD ON ART AND ANALYSIS **THEATRE** JAMES CHRISTOPHER ON THE VERGE

IRIS MURDOCH

'THE BLACK PRINCE'



Murder, suicide, abortion, homosexuality, incest, prostitution, blackmail, black magic and flagellation: Iris Murdoch's novels, even though they deal with such spiritual matters as Art and Philosophy and Religion, don't shrink from the physical side of life. Bradley Pearson, the protagonist of 'The Black Prince', which Murdoch has now adapted for the stage, finds that it is often difficult to tell one side from the other. 'I was in a frenzy again, an *obscure* frenzy. What was this, love, sex, art?' He has fallen in love with Julian who is a girl almost 40 years younger than himself.

In the bowels of the Aldwych Theatre, the Great Dame of English literature is discussing her new play. On July 15 she will be 70. Although names like Plato, Tolstoy and Nietzsche are being bandied about, the interview, against expectations, does not turn out like a tutorial — it's more like a tea-time chat with a favourite granny. Murdoch may be cerebral and speak frightfully proper but above all she's terribly *sweet*.

' "The Black Prince" is a play about a particular eccentric individual which carries a lot of my own thoughts about art and writing. Essentially it is a love story. There's a tremendous love impact in it which I hope will come across. Bradley is a failed artist and the play's very much about the truthfulness of art.'

Bradley has writer's block. He plans to leave London and surround himself with solitude so that his creative juices will start flowing. However something always prevents him: a friend hits his wife with a poker, his ex-wife returns from America, his sister leaves her husband. In the novel the farce is contained within a postmodern framework of Editor's and Author's forewords and postscripts plus four further postscripts by *'dramatis personae'*. How does all this transfer to the stage?

'Ah well, that is what you will see. I thought at first it would be impossible but Josephine (Hart, the producer, aka Mrs Maurice Saatchi) quite rightly said that part of the interest of the play would be in the form of a story within a story. There are soliloquies, but then the thing is haunted by "Hamlet" and I think Ian McDiarmid (who plays Bradley) is wonderful. The postscripts have been kept in because they can be rather touching and amusing. The whole thing is a matter of trickery. Theatre is trickery. The question is do the people stay in the theatre or do they leave? It is the artificiality of theatre that is attractive. I don't terribly like modern theatre or techniques where you're part of the action yourself or the stage is behind you instead of in front of you. I like the thing to be absolutely separate. I love the Aldwych, it's what a theatre should look like.'

She's off. Why does she portray marriage as a living hell when she has been happily married to fellow academic John Bayley for over 30 years?

'I don't know if I do. Tolstoy in "Anna Karenina" says "all happy families are alike but an unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion." Plato in "The Laws" (I don't suppose you've read "The Laws", it's not his best book and very tedious in many ways) criticises theatre directors for portraying evil people in an interesting way. Good people, because they're always steady and calm are not interesting. I'm a pessimist about human nature, I think it's weighted towards what is bad. Besides, there has to be something that people are frightened of and fear and horror are likely to be present in marriage.'

A SEVERED HEAD

When the novel was originally published in 1973 there was some confusion as to who the Black Prince was. Many people thought it might be Bradley Pearson; after all they share the same initials. 'They failed to notice that the character of Mr Loxias, the editor, is very important. Loxias is another of the names of Apollo, the god of art. It's a little bit of decoration but I did make him a rapist and a famous musician. I had a classical education and feel as though I live in the world of the Greek gods.'

If all this sounds too highbrow don't be deterred. 'I think the funny parts come to the fore. In "A Severed Head", which I did in collaboration with Jack Priestley, the comedy tended to swamp the serious side. I learned a lot from Jack. I think things marry better in this play. It's a very solitary business being a novelist, putting on a play brings you into contact with other people, it's a very pleasant interlude. Stuart Burge (the director) and I have worked closely together adding and subtracting lines. With a novel you have the happy liberty of being able to ramble but with a play every line must count. It's like making a motor car into a tin can.'

October sees the publication of Murdoch's 24th novel, 'The Message To The Planet'. 'It's not science fiction. It's about a mathematician who's also a sort of philosopher. He thinks he has discovered the key to human nature. To say how could there be such a thing neglects the fact that many great philosophers have found keys not unlike this. For instance, *cogito ergo sum* is one of the most influential remarks ever made by a single human being. But the question is whether he really is working on something or whether he's mad.' Number 25 is already in the making.

For the moment however 'The Black Prince' is uppermost in her mind. She seems pleased with the production but harbours a single regret. In the novel the action is dominated by 'the serene austere erection of the Post Office Tower'. 'I was rather hoping I could have a Post Office Tower but they said I couldn't. It is a sexual symbol. I have a little flat in London, high up in an attic, and I can see the tower from there across Kensington Gardens. It's a fine object.'

'The Black Prince' is previewing at the Aldwych Theatre and opens on April 25.

Above: Iris Murdoch; Centre: Sarah Badel and Ian McDiarmid in 'The Black Prince'.

BY MARK SANDERSON

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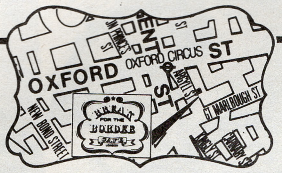
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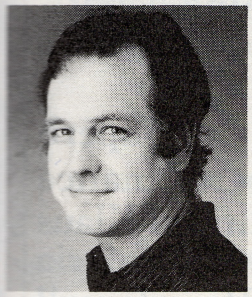
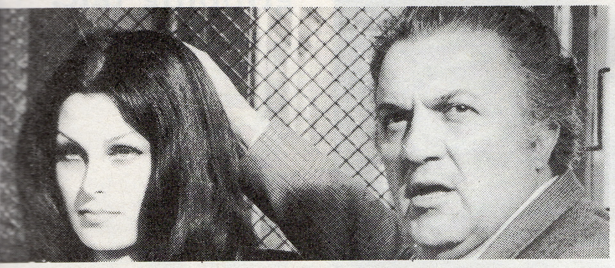


GEOFF ANDREW

On Fellini's Felonies

It was Orson Welles who said of Federico Fellini, 'His sophistication works because it's the creation of someone who doesn't have it. But he shows dangerous signs of being a superlative artist with little to say.' Strong stuff, and there are probably many thousands of movie-goers who would take issue with Welles over such a statement. But Orson was right. By the time of '8½' it was clear to some that Fellini was obsessed primarily with himself; that egocentricity ossified into egomania over the years, with films like 'Fellini: Satyricon', 'Fellini's Roma', and 'Fellini's Casanova' suggesting, through their very titles, that Federico regarded the entire world not only as his creative oyster but as a mere extension of his own self.

Had the ebullient maestro *not been a film-maker, it's quite likely that he would have been defined as a monstrous and terminally immature solipsist. Were you to number such a man amongst your acquaintances, you might be embarrassed, even horrified; when someone is so assured that their private preoccupations and obsessions, however trivial, are by their very nature a matter of enormous fascination to the world at large, he is sometimes decried as a fascist. Now Fellini may hail from the land of* Il Duce, *but that doesn't make him a political ogre. Artistically, on the other hand, he exemplifies a none too dissimilar way of thinking. However much he might proclaim his affection for grotesques of every sort, one can't help discerning in his work a certain contempt for the rest of the world: women are stereotyped as gargantuan madonnas and whores, child-simpletons, impossibly remote and ethereal angels, or — in 'City of Women' — a dread-inspiring breed of castrating feminists; men as pathetic layabouts, ineffectual intellectuals, boorish drunks, would-be Don Juans plagued by fears of impotence. Mussolini's minions, interestingly, are generally seen as comic wimps, and thus divested of any real political threat, power, or significance.*



Fellini's dependence on such simple-minded caricatures — presumably derived from his early career as a cartoonist — illustrates the way his movies function in a social, historical, political, even a moral vacuum: this despite the flatulent pretensions to socio-political comment and satire in films as diverse as 'La Dolce Vita', 'Amarcord', 'Orchestra Rehearsal' and 'Ginger and Fred', and despite a quickly abandoned association with neo-realism, from which one imagines he inherited his early, facile interest in the activities of the downtrodden, the poor and the unemployed (it's no accident that his '50s films are by far his best). The world as envisioned by Fellini is hermetic, an over-ripe figment of an imagination more concerned with being found imaginative than with actually being imaginative. Illogically and arrogantly, Federico insists on the inherent tragi-comic relevance of his own cinematic doodles: inherent, apparently, because they are the doodles of an Artist. But such a presumption merely puts the horse before the cart; he would be an artist if his work was in itself interesting. And when someone is as self-obsessed and self-indulgent as Fellini, there is a case for arguing that his ideas are not automatically affecting. Indeed, all too often he bludgeons us into simply submitting, no questions asked, to his coarse comic-strip vision of life's interminably effervescent merry-go-round: ecco il mio mondo! *But a more subtle artist inflects the world as it is with his own moral viewpoint, without feeling duty-bound to stress at each and every turn the profoundly private and personal nature of its genesis. Even fantasists as idiosyncratic as David Lynch or Jan Svankmajer invite us to contemplate the universe they present in their films; invite us to relate to it, negatively or positively, rather than just to accept it whole-heartedly as the creation of a Godlike supremo. Fellini's creativity is of an altogether different order: in his worst excesses, he simply farts in our faces, and expects us to like it.*

CRITICS' CHOICE

1. 'Matewan'
John Sayles emulates the classic Western in this moving minestrike drama.

2. 'Daughter of the Nile'
The fun and frustration of adolescence as seen through the eyes of Taiwanese director Hou Xiaoxian.

3. 'Chocolat'
Director Claire Denis's powerful debut chronicles the last days of colonialism in French West Africa.

4. 'La Senyora'
Jordi Cadena's engrossing drama of stifled sexuality among the Spanish bourgeoisie.

5. 'That Night in Varennes'
Ettore Scola's sumptuous melo, with bizarre cast, about the French Revolution.

6. 'The Tall Guy'
Jeff Goldblum and British alternative comedy mix to pleasing effect in Mel Smith's directing debut.

7. 'Patty Hearst'
Natasha Richardson captivates in Paul Schrader's biopic on the heiress kidnapping.

8. 'The Adventures of Baron Munchausen'
Ambitious effects hit more than miss the mark in Gilliam's tale of the legendary fibber.

9. 'Kamikaze'
Besson-produced semi-sci-fi satire on television. Stylish but slim.

10. 'La Strada'
Revival of Fellini's charming, if sentimental, drama seeing life as a circus.

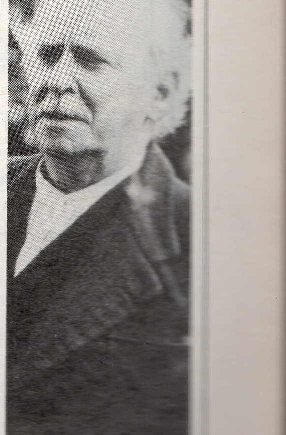
'Daughter of the Nile'

Renoir

At first sight, you wouldn't clock this as a film from the director of 'A Summer at Grandpa's' and 'The Time to Live and the Time to Die'. It's about urban teenagers and young adults on the fringes of crime, and its central character is a kid who pays for her night-classes by selling chicken for Colonel Sanders and otherwise generally has her nose into Japanese graphic novels — like the one that gives the film its title. But despite the shift from his usual rural settings to the extremely mean streets of present-day Taipei, this turns out to be another of Hou Xiaoxian's haunting accounts of the joys and terrors of adolescence. The young woman at its centre is struggling to keep her father and elder brother (cop and thief respectively) from each other's throats, while nursing a distant crush on one of her brother's friends, a too-pretty gigolo who gets into trouble when he starts dating a gangster's moll. The tangled relationships resolve themselves into a mesh of disappointments and frustrations, and the overall mood is certainly rather downbeat. But there are also charming eruptions of humour, and the sheer cinematic eloquence of Hou's mellow visual style makes the film a lot more life-enhancing than most of the stuff on London's screens. Often melancholy, never maudlin, it touches some deep emotional truths. And its quietness speaks volumes.
Tony Rayns

'Da'

A-Z for venues



Hugh Leonard's stage play translates dully to the screen in this valentine to a dead Dublin father. Small-scale and intimate, it's closer to The Most Unforgettable Character I Ever Knew section in *Reader's Digest* than to 'I Never Sang For My Father'. Da (Barnard Hughes) is dead and buried, but comes back to exasperate his son, Charlie (Martin Sheen), now a successful playwright in New York. The ghost device releases a flood of flashbacks from Charlie's boyhood and young manhood, in all of which ineffectual Da plays the spoiler's part. His prospect of certain sex is banjaxed when Da approaches the park bench and, by dint of garrulity, unearths the girl's family history and queers the lad's pitch. He almost loses Charlie his first job too by insisting to the Loyalist employer, Mr Drumm (William Hickey), that Winston Churchill resembles 'a boiled shite'. Any hope of presenting an emotional exorcism as Charlie wins through to the realisation that his Da loves him is shafted by the sheer obviousness of the old man's affection from the start. A brief acrimonious skirmish between Sheen's adult Charlie and his callow younger self (Karl Hayden) looks more promising, but goes nowhere. Mildly entertaining.
Brian Case

"Superbly played by Klaus Maria Brandauer and Faye Dunaway, the film's real find is David Eberts...an exquisite period piece well worth seeing."
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"Dazzling debut to set the emotions on fire."
SHAUN USHER — DAILY MAIL

"Sizzling performance."
PAULINE McLEOD — DAILY MIRROR

"Bold and sensitive."
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"Make a point of seeing it."
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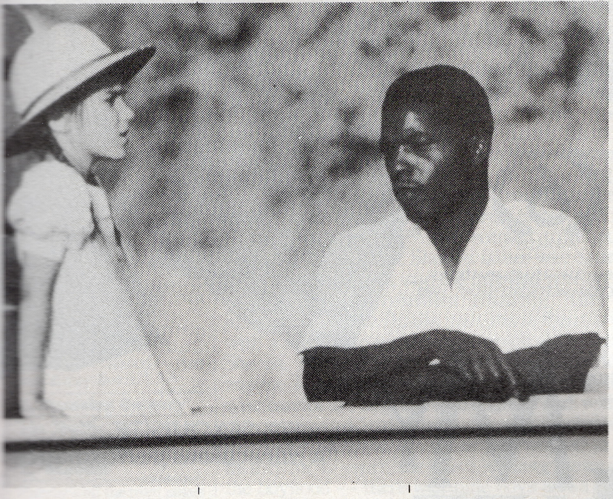
'Chocolat'

Chelsea



For the most part 'Chocolat' is one long flashback. A young woman called France returns to the Cameroons where she recalls her childhood as the daughter of a district governor of French West Africa. This idyllic existence is shattered when a plane prangs near her home, forcing the stranded passengers to stay with her parents while they wait for new parts to arrive. The motley crew — all demonstrating various aspects of empire-building — include a white plantation owner and his black concubine, a newly-wed couple on their first visit to the dark continent and an ex-priest, Luc (Jean-Claude Adelin), full of Rousseau-esque ideals, who turns out to be the worst of the lot. It is his influence that destroys France's friendship with the houseboy Protée (Isaach de Bankolé) and prompts her mother (Giulia Boschi) to make a pass at her servant. If all this seems somewhat schematic it isn't. In her amazingly assured debut, Claire Denis draws out the implications of the action with great subtlety. She makes the most of the exotic location and elicits strong performances from all her cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham as a mad Englishman. Abdullah Ibrahim's excellent score enhances the atmosphere of repression and frustration. What, in lesser hands, could have been a comical polemic turns out to be a powerful and stylish indictment of colonialism. And, with the memory complete and the flashback over, the ending offers both relief and release.

Mark Sanderson

'La Senyora'

ICA

Lorca and the Buñuel of 'El' contribute to the deep Spanish atmosphere of Jordi Cadena's study of stifled sexuality and its misshapen fruit. Teresa (Silvia Tortosa) is married off to old Nicolau (Hermann Bonnin) who wears gloves in bed, fears dirt on the Howard Hughes model, and in place of sexual congress offers her a golden thimble of semen. She masturbates with fans, he watches. He wants an heir, she rinses his thimbles down the sink, and the marriage drags on until his death, at which she contemptuouslymakes free with his corpse. Teresa, the victim of a bourgeois property deal, inherits everything, but the nephew she wishes to settle upon — in both senses — dies of shock diving into her pool to wash prior to consummating their passion. Hard cheese on Teresa indeed, and she has to make do with Rafael (Luis Merlo), her gardener. She finally manages some straightforward stuff, falls for the lad, but learns that he is to marry a girl of his own age. And the story comes full circle, with her terms as inhuman as Nicolau's. Pathological indeed, but not remotely leering, the history certainly puts a damper on the hope centres.

Brian Case

'Hanussen'

Odeon Haymarket

'Hanussen' marks the third collaboration of director Istvan Szabo, cinematographer Lajos Koltai and Klaus Maria Brandauer, their last being the stunning 'Colonel Redl'. Klaus Schneider (Brandauer) is an Austrian sergeant and clairvoyant whose gifts first attract moderate acclaim during his recuperation from fighting in World War One. In hospital he forms friendships with two people who will help to shape his future: Jewish psychologist Bettelheim (Erland Josephson) and Nowotny (Karoly Eperjes), an ambitious army buddy who decides to expose Schneider's talents for a tidy sum. Nowotny accompanies Schneider, newly dubbed with the stage name Hanussen, on a tour to Vienna and Berlin, where the seer's phenomenal predictions bring him into contact with the decadent post-war elite. Despite his apolitical stance, Hanussen's prophecies of Hitler's rise to power inevitably implicate him with the Nazis and threaten his friendships and precarious sense of stability. Brandauer's dominating screen presence is perfectly suited to the role of the charismatic seducer, whose abilities to transfer his will and to control respondents serve as a not-so subtle metaphor for the rise of Fascism in a chaotic society. Szabo hightens the mysticism with a pervading sense of menace, which together with Koltai's exquisite visuals captivates attention throughout.

Colette Maude

'The Serpent and the Rainbow'

A-Z for venues

'Nightmare on Elm Street' director Wes Craven's tale of voodoo and revolution on the island of Haiti is like a bad Graham Green adaptation seen under the influence of hallucinogenic substances. A Harvard anthropologist (Bill Pullman) searching for the toxic drug which voodoo priests use to zombify their victims spends a lot of time hanging around in graveyards, checking out charlatan goat-revivers and experiencing weird dreams. He is much taken with psychiatrist Cathy Tyson, but less keen on the unfriendly attentions of 'Baby Doc' Duvalier's suspicious Ton Ton Macoute heavies — especially when head honcho Paul Winfield acquaints him with a blow torch and threatens to drive a nail through his dick. Making effective use of snakes, tarantulas, scorpions and zombie brides, Craven piles on the nightmare sequences and nerve-jangling sounds, creating an atmosphere of menace and psychological disorientation. Unfortunately, the political parallel between the ideological repression of Baby Doc's regime and the stultifying effects of the zombifying fluid is only sketchily developed, leaving us with a series of striking but isolated set-pieces. As a horror movie it lacks venom, and there's certainly no crock of gold at the end.

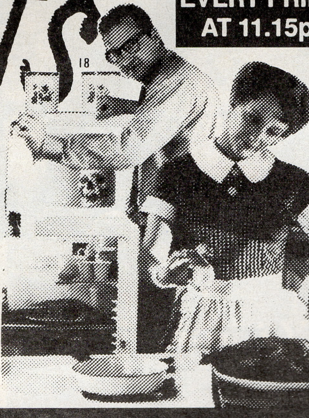
Nigel Floyd

'La Strada'

Everyman

Revived in a fine new 35mm print, Fellini's 1954 film, for all its sentimentality, overshadows virtually everything he's made since 'La Dolce Vita'. As ever for *il maestro*, life is both cyclic odyssey and circus, a teeming, tragicomic arena of pain, cruelty and solitude. The director's wide-eyed wife Giulietta Masina plays Gesolmina, a naive waif whose simpleton innocence provides a direct line to life's eternal mysteries; when she is sold into virtual slavery to play clown to itinerant strongman Zampano (Anthony Quinn), the boorish brute, a drunken womaniser, simply exploits his new assistant's well-meaning desire for affection at every opportunity. It's basically a road-movie: she vainly tries to escape, they join a circus, and her friendship with the tightrope-walking Fool (Richard Basehart) brings its own problems. Despite the pessimism of much of the story, memorably embodied in the grey, desolate towns the pair visit, Fellini had already moved far from his roots in neo-realism; symbols, metaphors and larger-than-life performances (with Gesolmina clearly inspired by Chaplin) hold sway, and moments of bizarre if inconsequential charm abound. If there's less to the film than first appears, there's no denying the power of Zampano's final, belated redemption on an empty beach, accompanied by the stirring strains of Nino Rota's score. And Fellini's poetic eye is well served by Otello Martelli's melancholy monochrome images.

Geoff Andrew



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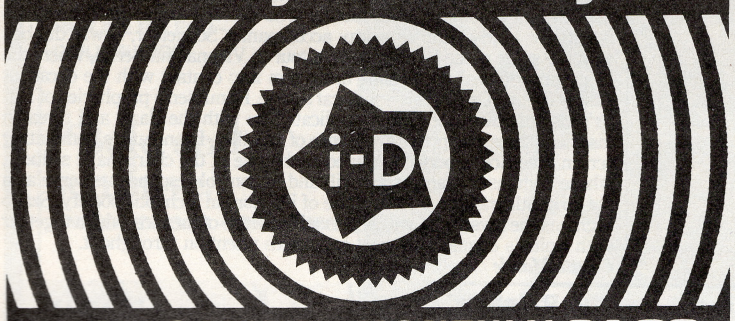

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the Serpent
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Leaping liars! The Baron down six places!

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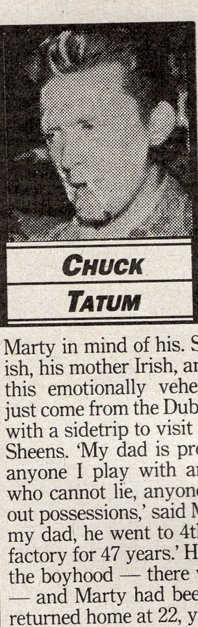


CHUCK TATUM

There's a little bit of Irish in all of us, fans. I wuz hunkering the other week with **Martin Sheen** and his buddy **Matt Clark** who you know best from acting in 'Brubaker', 'The Outlaw Josey Wales' and 'Honky Tonk Man'. Matt has just directed Marty in 'Da', **Hugh Leonard**'s reminiscences of his Irish father, and it sure seemed to've put Marty in mind of his. Sheen's father wuz Spanish, his mother Irish, and the mix had produced this emotionally vehement offspring. They'd just come from the Dublin première of the movie with a sidetrip to visit the shamrock side of the Sheens. 'My dad is pretty much the model for anyone I play with an honest centre, anyone who cannot lie, anyone with dignity and without possessions,' said Marty. 'He was a peasant, my dad, he went to 4th grade and worked in a factory for 47 years.' He was a looming figure in the boyhood — there wuz nine boys and a girl — and Marty had been in awe of him until he returned home at 22, young **Emilio Estevez** in his arms, and found himself looking over his father's head. 'Oh, shit! Whenever he was around I'd sit down.' He sprang up to mime stooping. First time his dad saw him on stage it was in 'The Subject is Roses' on Broadway. 'Back home, he was pacing and suddenly stopped and stared. He looked at me for the first time in his life. He never said a word. I'm not sure that you ever get over your old man, and I'm not sure you're supposed to. Right up to his death, he still called me honey.' How wuz he with **Charlie** and Emilio? 'I think of them more as brothers than children because I was a very immature father.'

I jogged him on to 'Badlands'. 'I still think it was the best thing I ever did, and I credit that to **Terrence Malick**. He had to leave Hollywood to save his life. He was so shy and so talented and so sensitive he was just overwhelmed with the offers and the power. He nurtured me in my spiritual search to put myself back together in 1981. Thank God he was there! I re-entered the Catholic faith and became a more developed person. Terry was instrumental in nourishing me towards rejoining the community of faith. I'd just come out of India on "Gandhi" and I had a lot of confusing thoughts. I think it was exposure to the poverty. That'll change ya! It scared me to the bones!' He and Emilio watched buzzards feeding on stiffs. 'It just chills your heart,' he gulped. 'So wadda 'bout "Apocalypse Now!"?' I quizzed. Buzzards is no news to **Tatum**, fans. '**John Milius** I don't give any attention to, frankly, he's like a boy scout. Milius is make-believe. I have no interest in what his images are. They're all Movieland. He's a sweet man, a big bear, a child, immature. When the movie opened they beat the hell outa **Francis**. They were waiting for him in the bushes. **UA** were so concerned about getting their money back and leaving a favourable impression they cut the opening scene in the hotel for Cannes. We were trying to say, you did a lot of things to your sons, and you can't get 'em back. It's a very important scene for the film because it says, all right — *this* is our guy. You may be used to American soldiers in war films, but he's different. He kills people face to face, and this is what it does to him. *He's a frigging lunatic*! We still want our MIAs back from Vietnam, and that's who they were. They were the Willards. It was open season.'

Marty took part in a demonstration against **Reagan**'s bombing of Libya and was asked by the Limey press why he took part. 'I told them I found it very difficult to admire any man who is not human enough to even apologise for killing a child. I'm embarrassed. I'm ashamed. We kill children every day in Central America. We've gone through eight years with an old actor, an ancient, foolish old man leading the most powerful nation on earth. When I go through the Door of Death I would rather go through it with a child holding my hand. I want a child to meet me and judge me. I'm so dramatic!' Matt Clark rolled the eyes. 'We're gonna hafta cut that scene. It'll never go,' he laughed.

PREVIEW

SPORT

Don Perretta knows the score

DON PERRETTA

On The London Marathon

The London Marathon is nine years old this Sunday. It's a significant birthday because this year the race is bigger, more expensive, more competitive and has a higher profile than ever before. This time around there will be more than 31,000 starters at 9.30am in Greenwich Park, which makes it the biggest in the world, and the organisers expect around 24,000 to eventually finish the race on Westminster Bridge several hours later. What started life as a community experiment under the GLC has blossomed into a top ranking international event. Of course the fun-run element is still immensely important, not least for the TV companies who get a tremendous amount of mileage from the eccentrics who populate the race, but what attracts the big money sponsors — for the next three years US company ADT are footing the bill to the tune of at least £2 million — is the status of the race which attracts the best runners.

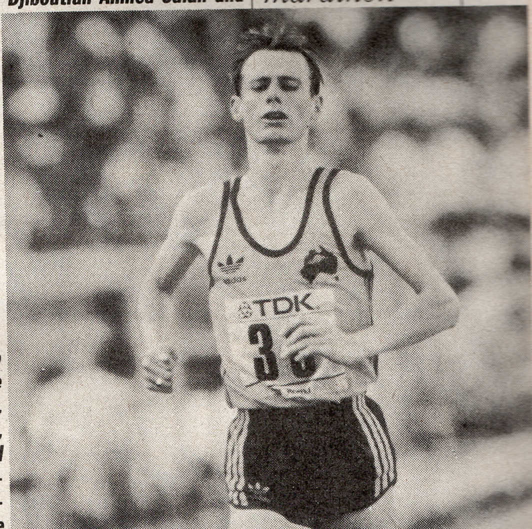
Against strong competition from both the Boston and Rotterdam events which happen round about the same time, the London Marathon would have had five of the top eight finishers from the Seoul Olympics taking part until Briton Charlie Spedding pulled out because of problems with his fitness. That still leaves Kenyan Douglas Wakiihuri, Djiboutian Ahmed Salah and Australians Steve Moneghetti and Rob De Castella, with Salah having the fastest time of the four of 2:07.07. Moneghetti, the first of the four to arrive in this country to start his training and acclimatisation, considers the field to be the strongest of any marathon outside a major championship. The only other possible contender was Boston, but now that Olympic champ Bordin and top Briton Steve Jones have pulled out, the American race has been eclipsed.

Although it is an extremely competitive field even excluding the Olympians involved, the strong contenders are the runners already mentioned plus Ethiopian Wodajo Bolti, who ran second in the race where Dinsamo broke the world record. Moneghetti, a maths teacher from Ballarat, is attracting more tips than his record would suggest, especially when one considers that this will be only his fourth marathon. He ran his first ever at the Commonwealth Games in '86 and finished third, and since then has only run in championship races and hasn't improved on his time. He insists that 'in those races it's all about tactics, the time isn't that important' but he considers that this will be the occasion to improve his personal best considerably. 'If you look at my time I'm only ranked 17th amongst the runners here, but there's such a strong field of people who have run 2:08.00 to 2:10.00. It's a sensational field and I hope to run under 2:10.00, anything else will be a bonus.' Such modesty conceals a superb distance runner who recently finished fourth in the World Cross-Country Championships and who has the talent to train to a relatively modest level (110 miles a week, very low compared to most) but step up several gears on race day. That talent combined with the four slices of toast and Vegemite that he habitually eats before a race could well see him lead the field. The race is being televised live down under.

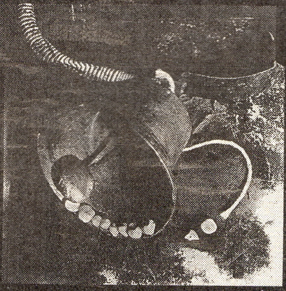
The Australian assault on the London Marathon would have been complete but for the withdrawal of Moneghetti's compatriot, Lisa Martin, fastest in the world last year. The women's race is nevertheless tight and will probably be contested between Portugese Aurora Cunha, Briton Angie Pain and the French runner Veronique Marot. Then of course, there's the wheelchair race, with ex-British record holder Mike Karaphillides a strong contender, but the most likely winner is Chris Hallam, who holds an astonishing best time of 1:54.00.

The London Marathon will be run this Sunday, starting at 9.30am. For details see Sport Listings.

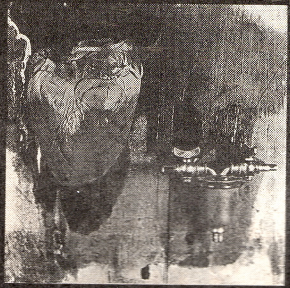
> *'Monighetti, a maths teacher from Ballarat, is attracting more tips than his record would suggest, especially when one considers that this will be only his fourth marathon'*



MARK SHEARMAN



initial pressing (30,000) includes illustrated lyric booklet

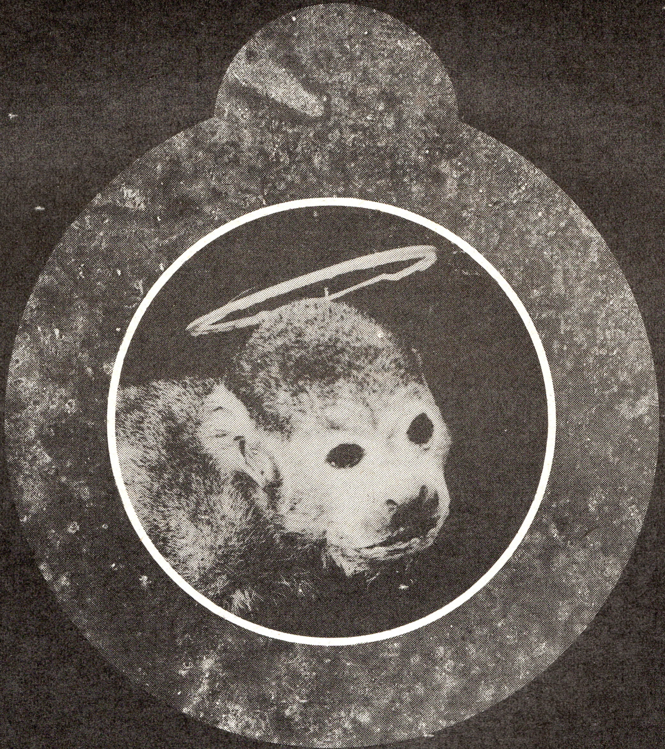


Nine Postcards

a set of 9 postcards designed with images from lyric booklet

Nine Posters

a set of 9 posters designed with images from lyric booklet



PIXIES

Doolittle Album CAD 905 , Cassette CAD C 905 , CD CAD 905 CD 4AD

April: 19 **BRIGHTON**, Top Rank. 20 **SOUTHEND**, Cliffs Pavillion. 21 **NORWICH**, University of East Anglia. 23 **CAMBRIDGE**, Corn Exchange.
24 **BIRMINGHAM**, Humming Bird. 25 **NOTTINGHAM**, Rock City. 27 **NEWCASTLE**, Polytechnic. 28 **GLASGOW**, Queen Margaret University.
29 **ABERDEEN**, Venue. 30 **EDINBURGH**, Queens Hall. May: 2 **MANCHESTER**, International II. 3 **LIVERPOOL**, Royal Court. 4 **SHEFFIELD**, Octagon.
5 **LEEDS**, Polytechnic. 7 **LEICESTER**, University. 8 **BRISTOL**, Studio. 9 **CARDIFF**, University. 10 **LONDON**, Town & Country Club.
11 **LONDON**, Town & Country Club. July: 5 **LONDON**, Kilburn National Ballroom.

PREVIEW

MUSIC

The unmissable gigs, the best new vinyl and the news, trews and screws of Swipe. Edited by Nick Coleman.

Laura Lee Davies

On A Ukrainian Wedding Present

Less than two years ago, the music press proclaimed rattling indie guitar heroes The Wedding Present worthy successors to The Smiths as champions of British indie rock. Lyricist and singer David Gedge dominated the covers of the weekly rags while their thrashing melodies and tales of lovelorn youth rang most nights from John Peel's radio programmes, and their album, 'George Best', proved a classic début. Although The House Of Love have since superceded them in the alternative pop ranks, the band are still widely regarded as one of Britain's finest indie bands. This week they tour to promote the latest venture 'Ukrainski Vistupi V Johna Peela', an album of Ukrainian folk songs.

Drummer Simon Smith explained the attraction for the band of giving something else that special Wedding Present treatment for once, when their own singles were ever nearing chart success. 'With the proper stuff, we'd got to the stage where we were playing to about 2,000 people a night. After recording a session for John Peel of Ukrainian folk songs, playing them live just seemed to be the next logical step. It'll be great to play smaller places again and try out weird instruments.'

So the Leeds four-piece recruited the talents of singing balalaika wizard Len Liggins and mandolin man Roman Remeynes and dug up their own guitarist Pete Solowka's Eastern roots, turning their hands to songs of old men with goatee beards and triumphal soldiers as a change from Gedge's favourite subject: 'Going out with girls and generally having a bad time of it.'

The ten-inch, despite at times sounding like a drunken bunch of thrash punk Mary Hopkin fans in a wind tunnel ('Those Were The Days' is given back a little of its Ukrainian texture and its original title 'Davni Chasy'), makes interesting listening as one of our most pale-faced of Western bands, in all their guitar glory, bring a twist to the current trend of mass World Music consumption. But isn't it rather arrogant musical indulgence? Many folk enjoy the odd excursion their favourite artists might make into other worlds — films, pencil drawings of old rockers or perhaps a reinterpretation of Hamlet — but since the release of their début album, they have released few new songs and an album of compiled old material entitled 'Tommy'. Admittedly, they were temporarily red-tape casualties of major indie distributors Red Rhino going into liquidation last Autumn, but Gedge defends what many fans see as a waste of valuable time now that the band have left their own label, Reception, for RCA.

'We've had a few letters saying basically, "Why do something different when you can do the same thing all the time?" But then, we never really take much notice of what our fans say anyway! But we took great pains to say the concerts are going to consist of all-Ukrainian music. I think the audience will be there because we're The Wedding Present but the fans will get to hear something they've probably not had access to before. We're really doing it because we enjoy it.'

But if they want to start out with something new all over again, it would be dishonest to use the band name and pretend it had nothing to do with their being able to play the Town & Country with a handful of folk songs. The music has no value in being authentic and as they admit, it's clear fans are going to see them for their name rather than the cultural exchange. To presume that the audience won't spend the whole time shouting for their pet Wedding Present numbers would be naive. Doesn't this imply a certain blind adoration expected from their fans? Surely it is just as uncommendable as rushing off to see Youssou N'Dour because a friend at a dinner party confided in you over the Gold Blend, that the Guardian rated World Music on an ideological par with unleaded petrol.

At least the band have endeavoured to steer it away from racist novelty and perhaps might sleep a little easier at night than 'Gracelands'-ophiles who thought Paul Simon had brought the whole world to their living rooms.

The Wedding Present offer 'An Evening Of Ukrainian Folk Music' at the Town & Country Club on April 20 and 'Ukrainski Vistupi V Johna Peela' (RCA) on April 17.

GROOVES

Some recent African goodies examined by *Isabel Appio*:

1. Boyoyo Boys: 'TJ Today' (Greensleeves)

The TJ stands for township jive, and the Boyoyo Boys play one of the most distinctive and delicious brands around. A close cousin to zydeco and ska, with perky squeeze box and a violin player that *has* to be heard — Yehudi Menhuin eat your heart out.

2. Trio AKA: 'Mama Cristina' (AA Enterprises)

Recorded in Angola, the trio play an absorbing mix of Cuban, Brazilian and Zairean styles with lyrics citing the experiences of their war-torn country.

3. Tata Bambo Kouyate: 'Djely Mousso' (Sterns)

Good to see a female voice amongst all the current Malian talent. Tata is a powerful 'praise singer' who sticks to mainly slow tempo traditionally based songs on her first UK release.

4. Kafala Brothers: 'Ngola' (AA Enterprises)

Sort of an Angolan Proclaimers (only far more accomplished, meaningful and entertaining), the Kafala Brothers have a unique way with acoustic ballads, sweet voices, and tales of suffering and love. Have a listen.

5. Pepe Kalle & Nyboma: 'Moyibi' (Sterns)

The uniting of two perfectly matched, popular Zairean vocalists creating a sparkling blend of soukous ('kwas-kwasa') with a helping hand from Kanda Bongo Man.

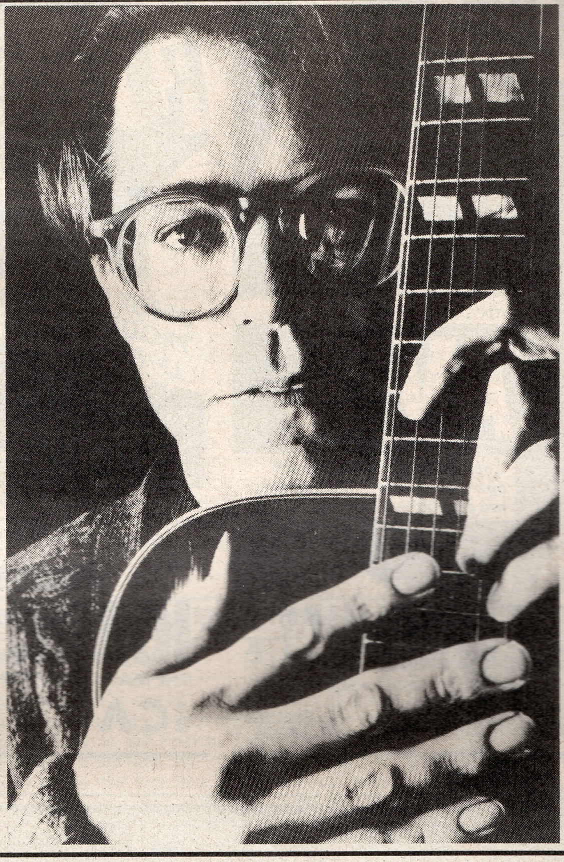
6. Cheb Khaled & Safy Boutella: 'Kutché (Sterns)

Welcome jazz/pop influence to Algerian Cheb Khaled's reknowned style — Rai looks up due to a sprucing by German-born, Californian-influenced Boutella and production by Martin Meissonier.

7. Orchestra Marrabenta: 'Independence' (World Circuit)

This energetic Orchestra from Mozambique are famed for their local rhythms updated with zouk, reggae and salsa, and their campaigning sentiments.

LIVES



Bill Frisell Band + The Lodge

Town & Country, Mon

Rather Bill than me. Being the world's most 'interesting' guitarist, being a guitar hero for people who disapprove of guitars, must be highly stressful — what happens if Bill loses the urge to be 'original' and 'challenging', what happens when Bill gets an itch to play to the gallery? There are clues on the new Elektra album 'Before We Were Born'. This record is, I hope, as routine as Frisell gets: an attractive but rather clever, over-wrought paean to the musical values of long-time collaborator John Zorn, knotted with hairpin bends and predictable disjunctions, leavened with enough good jokes to satisfy those who need them; but evincing no real *heart*. It's an eventful but self-conscious record and doesn't come within flobbing distance of its predecessor on ECM, 'Lookout For Hope', wherein a few simple tunes were taken to the moon by the collective endeavour of the essential BF Band: BF himself, Kermit Driscoll (bass), Joey Baron (drums) and the extraordinary Hank Roberts (cello). Their improvised work on the new album constitutes nearly all of its high points and, fortunately, this is the configuration to be witnessed at the T&C tonight. With luck there'll be less of the Zorn-induced hack montage nonsense (only Zorn himself seems capable of pulling it off convincingly) and rather more of the sublime improvisational electricity we only glimpse occasionally on the new album. Unmissable really, and probably worth turning up in time to catch Blegvad's The Lodge.
Nick Coleman

The JBs

Town & Country, Sat, Sun

Let's Get Funky! The men and women who put their behinds into the groove that backed the James Brown sex scream return to the stage from whence they really rocked the House crew last year (a live LP of same was issued late last year ironically titled 'Finally Getting Paid'). Consolidating their reputation built upon a couple of damned funkin' LPs issued back in '73/'74 and the 'James Brown's Funky People' recent re-releases, the JBs blow out their cool jazz and hot dance sounds to the massed delight of countless kids too young to know that Richard Nixon was a President and not head of the magic circle. They might not be The Meters, but the JBs are original groove-makers with skills that have not been imitated since their leader became The Disco King. Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley, Bobby Byrd, Vicki Anderson, Marva Whitney and Funkadelic's Horny Horns on one stage!?! It's Got To Be Funky! Free James Brown.
Mal Peachey

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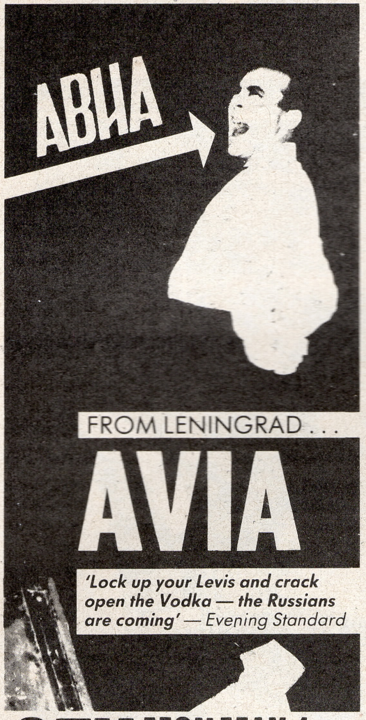

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VIKING

ON 26th NOVEMBER 1988 AN EXTRAORDINARY EVENT TOOK PLACE

NINE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST EXPONENTS OF THE ROCK GUITAR JOINED TOGETHER FOR AN AMAZING CONCERT

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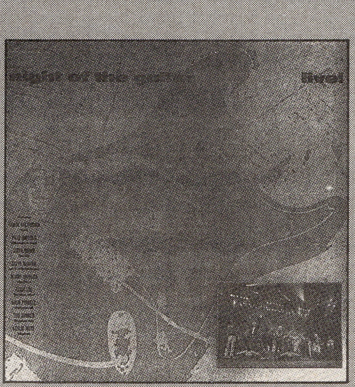

THE SHOW FEATURED THE TALENTS OF :

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PETE HAYCOCK *Climax Blues Band*
STEVE HOWE *Yes, Asia*
STEVE HUNTER *Peter Gabriel, Lou Reed*
ROBBY KRIEGER *The Doors*
ALVIN LEE *Ten Years After*
ANDY POWELL *Wishbone Ash*
TED TURNER *Wishbone Ash*
LESLIE WEST *Mountain*

AND INCLUDED CLASSICS LIKE *'Hey Joe', 'Roadhouse Blues', 'The Clap', 'The King Will Come', 'All Along The Watchtower'* AND MANY OTHER GREAT SONGS ● THIS IS CLASSIC ROCK AT IT'S BEST ● NOW YOU CAN SHARE THE EXPERIENCE ON LP, CASSETTE AND CD – AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD RECORD SHOPS ● ALSO AVAILABLE – *Night Of The Guitar Volume One* HOME VIDEO CASSETTE FROM PMI.

I.R.S.

NIGHT OF THE GUITAR special appearance Town and Country Club London Thursday 4th May.

Todd Terry + T LA Rock

Fridge, Fri

Swish New York house mixer/producer Todd Terry makes his first major appearance in town since New Year's Eve. Essentially a studio man, Terry doesn't have a rivetting live show, and some (including melodic house trio Ten City) say he should stick behind the studio mixing desk. Terry creates sparse, incessent house beats a là club classic 'Weekend' to be heard on the superb 'To The Batmobile Let's Go' LP (Sleeping Bag). The enigmatic Terry most probably makes this appearance for the benefit of labelmate Bronx rapper T LA Rock; the two have collaborated on Rock's 'You Got The Time/Flow With The New Style' single and forthcoming album. Don't expect much in the way of a 'live' act (just taped sampling and keyboards) but depend on a master DJ with the capacity to strike up that old proverbial house dance groove, and never let go.
Isabel Appio

Duranduran

London Docklands Arena, Sat

As far away from the West End and most human life-forms as possible, is seated *The-Most-Exciting-Musical-Phenomenon-Since-The-Birth-Of-Tim-Rice*: the London Docklands Arena. This week it loses its metaphorical cherry as a music venue to those Wild Boys of designer techno-pop and general all-round victims of The Good Life, Duranduran. Teen raves and secretary squeals as the three survivors of one of the '80s most fashion-bound pop bands go through the motions with kitsch classics like 'Planet Earth' and 'Girls On Film' standing with only slight awkwardness alongside the later, slicker 'Notorious' and 'Skin Trade'. Chubby chops Le Bon and an army of loyal subjects prove New Romantics die hard.
Laura Lee Davies

Les Negresses Vertes

Ronnie Scotts, Sun

The only thing remotely green about the Green Negresses is their tour bus. They are in fact eight white French men and a dog who thumb their noses at any categorisation by colour, sex or the type of music they play. They see themselves as musical artists, using big splashes of ska, flamenco, gypsy from the wilds of the Camargue, rai, rock and Parisian café music to create colourful and original canvases. Their brushstrokes are bold, honest, provocative, funny, often surreal and always entirely fresh, conveying a raw energy that could only be matched by The Pogues. Dressed in a motley assortment from flea markets, they sing of tramps, drunkards, hunger and sunshine, topping the bill with their rousing manifesto against racism, La Danse Des Negresses.
Jo Shinner

SINGLES

Morrissey: 'Interesting Drug' (His Master's Voice)

'There are some bad people on the rise' intones the Divine Mr M; usual song structure, quite fast, the voice getting better and better. Once again Morrissey is his own cover star: very nice too, but no Yootha Joyce.

Rod Stewart: 'My Heart Can't Tell You No' (WEA)

Thought this *was* Yootha, but no, it's Rodders with the sort of song that will doubtless be requested on Bates's 'Our Tune' by remorseful wife-beaters.

John Marshall: 'Ball of Confusion' (WEA)

Distinctly wearisome retread of the Temptations song with a few 'punchy' horns and 'funky' wooh! vocalisations thrown in. Pointless.

Dr Feelgood: 'Milk and Alcohol' (Liberty)

Same riff, same growling. Sounded spunky and fresh in the late '70s but a little tired now. Did we have a Pub Rock revival yet?

Girls Talkin': 'Girls Talkin' ' (Ten)

The sort of group much beloved of South London drag pub audiences: brash, black, fast, lots of hair, a bit Bobby O-ish. Repetitive but fun.

The Painted Word: 'Worldwide' (RCA)

A determined stab at the summer market: a big-voiced, melodic pop love song, reminiscent of the Lotus Eaters (remember?). And do I detect a quote from 'Hamlet' in the band's name?

Deon Estus: 'Heaven Help Me' (Mika/Polydor)

Okay, so he's a pal of George Michael (who co-wrote, produced and did backing vocals on this), but there's no need to sound absolutely identical. Breathy slow funk that could be a 'Faith' out-take.

Yazz: 'Where Has All The Love Gone?' (Big Life)

Yazz gets a social conscience, exhorting us to 'get rid of the ghetto'. Starts off rather dull, but works up a convincing sweat through some good work with the backing vocalists and ends up almost breathtaking.

Cherrelle: 'Affair' (Tabu)

'I don't need commitment . . . I don't want a promise' insists Cherrelle in a muscley little number in praise of the quickie. Would that we all had the stamina.

Children of the Night: 'We Play Ska' (Jive)

A hybrid of ska and acid house, and just in case there was any doubt Rankin' Roger keeps announcing 'this is acid ska'. How long till acid skiffle?

Fairground Attraction

Dominion, Wed 26

Undisputed darlings of this year's BPI fiasco, Eddie and the lads play all of their own instruments, look just like a bunch of busking students from Swansea and are ever so nice too. The amazing success of their debut single and LP 'First Of A Million Kisses' has helped not just the band, but a lot of the industry itself. Later this year Ms Reader (ex-Gang Of Four backing vocalist! Wait'll the *Scum* get their heads around the communist implications!) and the lads are going to be headlining at the Cambridge Folk Festival. Oh yes. They might have had a novelty Number One hit single, but at heart they are serious musicians. Tonight and tomorrow should, if all goes well, be a triumphantly acoustic and gentle celebration of what makes CDs so special — the clarity and intensity of hearing the string bass slap the body and Eddie slap her thigh. Light swing, light rock, light jazz and light evenings. All fits perfectly.
Mal Peachey

Etienne Daho + Bill Pritchard

Marquee, Fri

Etienne Daho is one of the new breed of 'Pan European' popstars, which means we might like him as well as the French. Though he thinks he's been influenced by The Smiths and the Mary Chain, the fact that he's performed with Kim Wilde and Carly Simon is a more reliable indication of his style — French pop with a little more guts than usual. The Parisiennes adore him, packing the Paris equivalent to Wembley Arena six nights on the trot, and this is his more modest UK debut. Daho's latest 'Pour Nos Vies Martiennes' (Virgin France) LP, includes the gem, 'Where's My Monkey' ('Where's my girl, boughh!, where are my friends, boughh!, and where's my monkey?') and is just what we have come to expect in the lineage of French popular music: Chevalier, Distel, Jarre, Halliday and now Daho making a perfect fifth addition to great moments in the history of French pop. Bill Pritchard, suburban indie rock's Jake Thackeray, lends his support.
Isabel Appio

Peter Hammill

Royalty Theatre, Fri, Sat

Oh woe and weilaway. 'Tis not the season to be jolly, leastways not when the old ex-Van Der Graaf misery-guts is in town, lashing his shriven spirit to the mast and taking us down in a spiral of throaty gurgles and bubbles of sputum. Actually, an awful lot of people owe plenty to Hammill — Bowie, Lydon, Mark E Smith and Peter Gabriel not least among them. His has always been an uncompromised vision of rock despair, pivoting about a healthy disrespect for the three-minute song format and one of the most scourging vocal styles in the history of the music. This tour is to promote the new Enigma album 'In A Foreign Town' and features Yer Man plus long-term collaborator, guitarist John Ellis. If you haven't been to confession lately, here's a big chance to make a quick quietus with God.
Nick Coleman

Sonny Rollins

Theatre Royal, Sun

A welcome return for the bullish sax supa, ever more elusive in terms of his recorded career, still spiralling frantically around the *idée fixe* that is supposed to lie at the heart of tenor saxophony. He'll probably never settle down to make terrific albums of contemporary jazz with a decent rhythm section; he'll probably never deliver a set of wholly tasteful tunes. But that is the appeal of the man: beneath the carapace of that huge burnished tone lurks a quivering creative inabsolutism. He will not sit down and be counted out. Don't stop the carnival.
Nick Coleman

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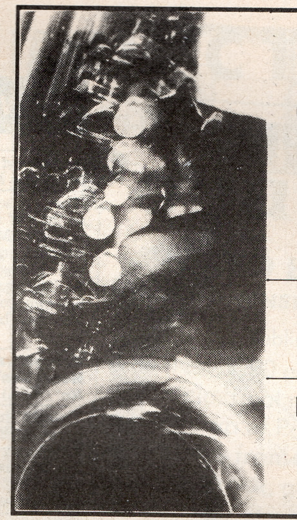

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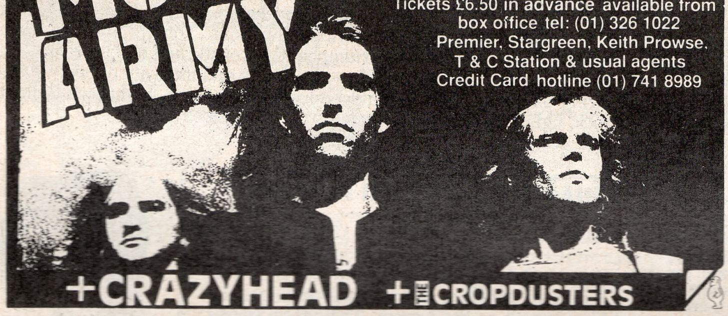

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ALBUMS

Salif Keita: 'Ko-Yan'

Mango/Island

Along with Fela, Ade and N'Dour, the name Keita is now firmly embedded in dinner party World Music vocabulary. Predictably, his impeccable recording history, including the landmark 'Soro' album of last year, continues with this new waxing. His taste for excellence, his surreal cries, wails and pleadings, his instinct for reconciling traditional Malian instruments (balafon and kora) with strident rock and sophisticated French studio techniques is as astounding as ever. In his themes he continues to express anguish over environmental and social concerns — roughly translated, 'Ko-Yan' means 'What's Going On?'. Listen to 'Ko-Yan' and you'll hear one of the healthiest and most optimistic routes to the global popularisation of African music.

Isabel Appio

Al Green: 'Love Ritual'

Demon/Hi

Meanwhile, Al's trousers were paying a visit to the 'Jordan River' laundromat without him . . . These are the off-cuts from one of the great lives. 'Rare & Previously Unreleased 1968-76' it's subtitled, jaundicedly, but we know better: these are the Giblets Of Genius. In fact, what we get is a vastly improved remix of the classic improvisational nonsense that is the title-track, a smattering of genuine rejects from Willie Mitchell's vaults and a stone *glorious* metaphysical masterpiece, 'Strong As Death (Sweet As Love)', a ballad of which we should all be proud. We also get a few unfinished grooves, a rather shrill Beatles cover (no, I'm not telling you which song) and the only recorded instance of Al Green singing out of tune, on the middle eight of the otherwise gorgeous 'Mimi'. I hardly need add that 'Love Ritual' is a church built on the rock of lost values. Buy it before it's too late.

Nick Coleman

Phoebe Snow: 'Something Real'

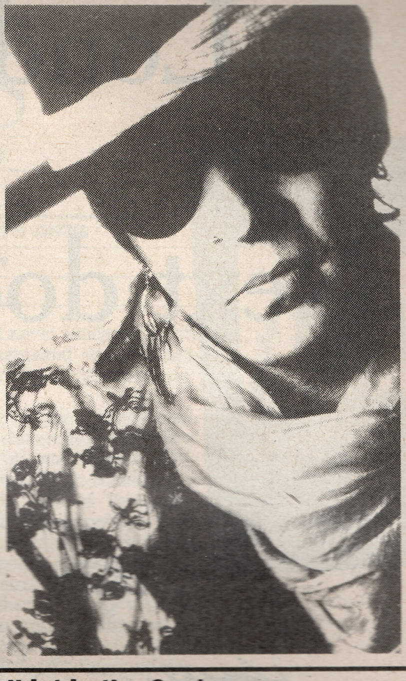
Elektra

Sleek, jazzishly executed FM pop ferruled with Snow's distinctive contralto yodel; a pleasant diversion, but in a world densely populated with beasts of that kidney, not a great event. This is not to diminish the artistic merits of 'Something Real', which are considerable within their own frame of reference, but it's hard to escape the fact that over the years elapsed since Snow's mid-'70s pomp, important changes have taken place: in particular, the market has quietly flooded with a new generation of Adult Orientated Artists slipping groovily into the mainstream from the 'soul' sector. Consequently, there's a faint air of obsolescence about this project, a feeling exacerbated by the knowledge that heavy-duty artists like Anita Baker have not only raised the aesthetic ante but also done it with a deal more style and depth. Grown-ups got soul these days. Interestingly, the one tune here that makes the most of Snow's undoubted technical facility is the album's sole funky moment, the gentle 'Soothin''. Otherwise, the ghastly treatment of The Emotions' uncoverable 'Best Of My Love' (*nobody* licks the Earth Wind & Fire horns on their own patch) is a paradigm of the kind of lapse in taste you can hardly afford when the agenda is no longer yours to set.

Nick Coleman

Little Steven: 'Revolution'

RCA



I have never been greatly impressed by the belief that rock is a political medium, ever since I interviewed a Dutch child pornographer who told me his heroes were Bob Dylan and John Lennon. I believe Colombian drug barons have the same tastes. Me, I endorse David Hare's remark that after 'Wopbop-aloobop-alop-bamboom' it all went down hill. Which brings us smartly to Little Steven, formerly geetar general of Bruce Springsteen's army, friend of Bono and organiser of Artists Against Apartheid, whose convictions have never stood in the way of his ability to groove. Hence, 'Revolution', a collection of songs written and arranged and produced by the exotically decorated musician which swaps the traditional protest formats for a stunning mix of Prince throb and Grace Jones monotone: pounding, impulsive, compulsive riffs that still give Steven room to propound on the persecution of the Indian ('Leonard Peltier'), the need for world revolution ('Where Do We Go From Here'), Nicaragua ('Newspeak'), and the simply staggering, almost Zeppeliny 'Discipline' ('I believe in the fantasy of America/ Not the illusion'): a bit like the Beastie Boys with soul, talent and . . .er, politics.

Steve Grant

SINGLES

Bonnie Raitt: 'Nick of Time' (Capitol)

Looking dangerously like a 'rock chick', Raitt delivers an intelligent number about how surprised she is to fall in love when all around her seems headed down the pan. Musically not thrilling, but worth it for the words.

Big Fun: 'Living For Your Love' (Jive)

Three pretty white boys with nice haircuts and great skin: could Big Fun be the Ronettes to Bros's Supremes? Prejudices aside, this is quite a compelling number that sounds as if it was recorded in an aircraft hangar. The lead singer has an eerie, high voice which, for once, is not swamped by tricksy production. Nice surprise of the week.

XTC: King For A Day (Virgin)

Can I feel nostalgic for the '80s yet? If so, this is the kind of thing that would remind me of about 1982 and which I might have got kind of excited about in my youth.

Collette: 'Ring My Bell' (CBS)

It was only a matter of time, and now here she is: a white Sinitta, right down to the lycra pants and bra! A cover of Anita Bell's 1981 hit, and you just have to hear this girl's voice. That's all I'm saying.

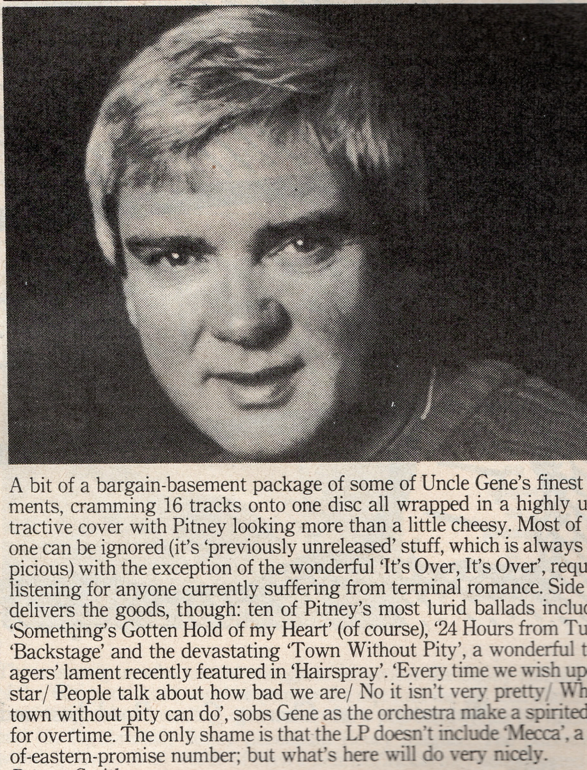
Tom Jones: 'Move Closer' (Jive)

Jones's new lease of life seems to have given him carte blanche to massacre any number he chooses. Having grunted his way through 'Kiss', he now stomps all over the old Phyllis Nelson number with predictably bullish results.

Rupert Smith

Gene Pitney: 'Walkin' in the Sun'

Epic



A bit of a bargain-basement package of some of Uncle Gene's finest moments, cramming 16 tracks onto one disc all wrapped in a highly unattractive cover with Pitney looking more than a little cheesy. Most of side one can be ignored (it's 'previously unreleased' stuff, which is always suspicious) with the exception of the wonderful 'It's Over, It's Over', required listening for anyone currently suffering from terminal romance. Side two delivers the goods, though: ten of Pitney's most lurid ballads including 'Something's Gotten Hold of my Heart' (of course), '24 Hours from Tulsa', 'Backstage' and the devastating 'Town Without Pity', a wonderful teenagers' lament recently featured in 'Hairspray'. 'Every time we wish upon a star/ People talk about how bad we are/ No it isn't very pretty/ What a town without pity can do', sobs Gene as the orchestra make a spirited bid for overtime. The only shame is that the LP doesn't include 'Mecca', a full-of-eastern-promise number; but what's here will do very nicely.

Rupert Smith

Steve Reich: 'Different Trains/ Electric Counterpoint'

Nonesuch

Forget the conventionally pretentious liner-notes; this is Reich's most accessible and melodically interesting album to date, even though he has sacrificed nothing in terms of complexity and rigour. Inspired by childhood train journeys made during the war years, 'Different Trains' is something of a stunner, with the Kronos Quartet playing alongside/in imitation of tapes of trains, air-raid sirens, and voices: although the method is minimalist, tedium is avoided by the surprisingly frequent shifts in key, tempo and medody. The overall effect is rich and entirely compelling. 'Electric Counterpoint', on the other hand, is relatively simple, with Pat Metheny soloing against his own recordings of ten guitars and two electric basses. Light and lyrical rather than dense, it's a far superior sequel to the earlier 'Vermont Counterpoint' for flute. Indeed, for all Reich's claims that he expects 'Different Trains' to lead to 'a new kind of documentary music video theater in the not too distant future', the two pieces see the composer at his most humane, the sombre 'Europe: During the War' movement of the first achieving an emotional power that is both horrific and compassionate.

Geoff Andrew

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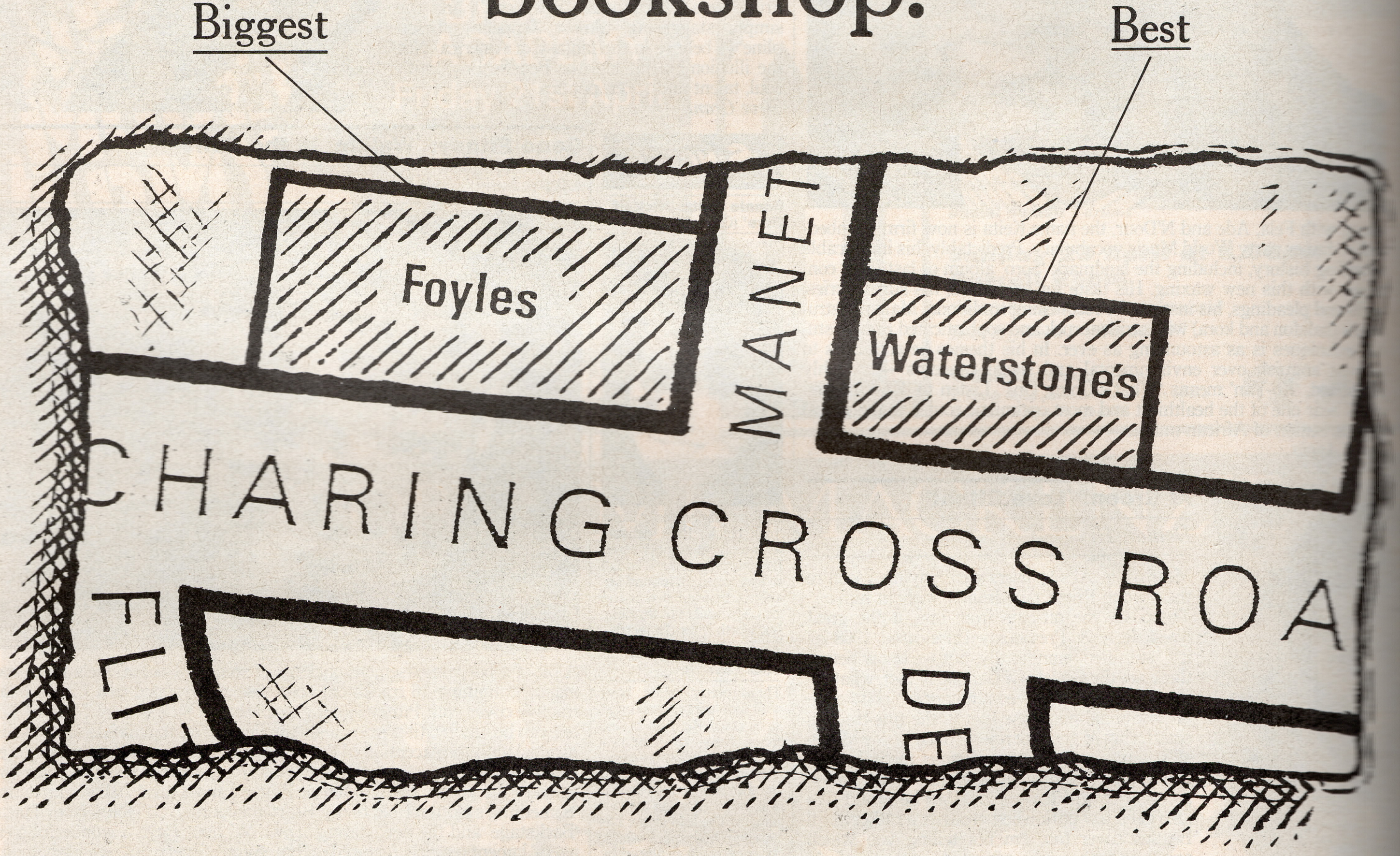

Waterstone's at Charing Cross Road has undergone a refit.

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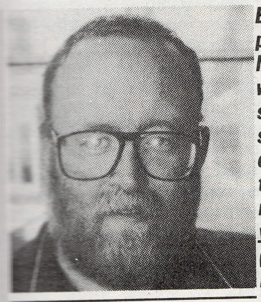
PREVIEW

BOOKS

The best of this week's new books in hardback & paperback. Edited by Maria Lexton

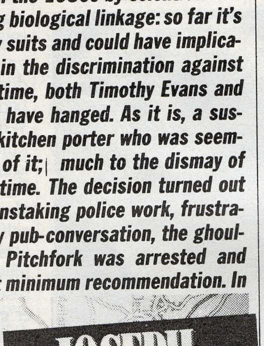


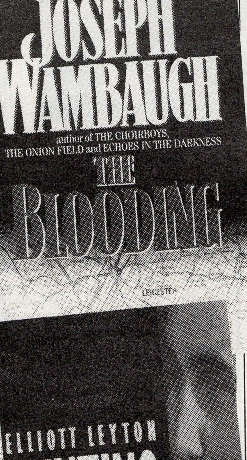
STEVE GRANT

On Murder Most Foul

Every so often, legal history throws up a precedent: Crippen was caught by radio half-way across the ocean; Robert Wood, whose thrilling trial climaxes the current superb BBC TV Series 'The Trials of Marshall Hall' was the first defendant to be acquitted of murder after giving evidence in the witness box. The sociopathic killer who raped, terrorised and strangled two 15-year-old girls in the space of three years (from 1983-86), in and near the village of Narborough, near Leicester, was the first murderer caught by the revolutionary technique of 'genetic fingerprinting'.

'Genetic fingerprinting', developed from research into DNA, has already transformed life and crime as much as the invention of fingerprinting did in the 1890s. Developed in the 1980s by scientist Alec Jeffreys, it's a foolproof method of identifying biological linkage: so far it's been used in immigration cases and paternity suits and could have implications on civil liberties — notably as a tool in the discrimination against AIDS sufferers. But if it had existed at the time, both Timothy Evans and (almost certainly) James Hanratty would not have hanged. As it is, a suspect for the Narborough killings, a 'weirdo' kitchen porter who was seemingly bang-to-rights, was released because of it; much to the dismay of certain traditionally-minded coppers at the time. The decision turned out to be spectacularly just: after months of painstaking police work, frustration, blood testing and the classic revelatory pub-conversation, the ghoulishly named and ghoulishly framed Colin Pitchfork was arrested and sentenced to a derisory life sentence without minimum recommendation. In 12 years, Pitchfork could be out, although Joseph Wambaugh's book of the case, *'The Blooding'* **(Bantam, £12.95), might seriously reduce his chances. Wambaugh, of course, is a heavyweight more used to the terrain of Los Angeles than Leicestershire, more at home with chilli dips than pork pies, as the author of such American crime classics as 'The Choirboys', 'The Onion Field' and 'Echoes in the Darkness'. But as a crime heavyweight with a peculiar compassion for the decent, toiling, suffering cop, he has told a fascinating story with rare simplicity, charm and tension. One can almost forgive such descriptions of the local dialect as: "Flippin' eck' is 'flipping heck', heard almost as often as 'bloody 'ell". Whaah??**


JOSEPH WAMBAUGH
author of THE CHOIRBOYS, THE ONION FIELD and ECHOES IN THE DARKNESS
THE BLOODING
LEICESTER



On a similar theme but less pleasing is Elliott Leyton's *'Hunting Humans'* **(Penguin, £3.99), a Canadian anthropologist's portentous guide to the bizarre and uncanny phenomenon of mass and 'serial' murder which is really mushrooming out of all proportion: since the 1950s, serial killing (multiple murder of strangers) has grown at least 100 times and keeps on rising. As Leyton's often fascinating and scholarly account reveals, the killers and victims cut across sex, age, class and occupation. Though he singles out four murderers for particular attention — Ted Bundy, Albert De Salvo, David Berkowitz (the 'Son of Sam') and Edmund Kemper — he also brings in other earlier slayers like Charles Starkweather (of 'Badlands' fame), Mark Essex, the Lousiana black man who went on the rampage against uniformed whites, and Karl Pazram, perhaps the most fascinating of them all. Brought up in misery and squalor, Pazram was the butcher of 21, sodomiser of 'thousands', who ran to the scaffold and remarked that the only way of reforming humans was to kill them!**

Leyton's history is thorough; his analysis always intriguing; common factors are analysed, with a conclusion that these are sane men driven to punish the world; that they are products of a society which has at last made it possible for individuals to be free to look within themselves, and in some cases to see only monsters. Problem is that like all books of this nature the ultimate question is never answered: why Sutcliffe or Nilsen rather than someone else of the same background; why Bundy or De Salvo and not you or me; why, why, why? Statistics and analysis never seem the whole picture.

SHORTS

Michael Jackson: 'Moonwalk' (Mandarin, £3.99)

Autobiography of *the* music phenomenon of all time tells how he began his career at the age of five with the Jackson Five who made it when the singer was eight or nine. It goes on to recount details of his life in Gary, Indiana which offer the best insights into the man's character, showing how his early battles of will with his father later helped him pursue hard business decisions. We learn little new about Whacko except that he wants to marry and have 13 kids. Perfect pre-teen reading.

Michael Malone: 'Uncivil Seasons' (Abacus, £3.99)

Malone looks set to become a true cult hero, with 'Handling Sin', one of his earlier books, currently being made into a film in the USA, and 'Time's Witness', his latest novel, about to be issued over here. 'Uncivil Seasons',like the latter, features wisecracking detective duo Cuddy Mangum and Justin Savile. When this very odd couple are called on to investigate the murder of the local senator's wife they find there's something rotten in the state of Hillston, North Carolina. Funny, witty and very clever stuff.

Tom Wolfe: 'The Pump House Gang' & 'The Painted Word' (Black Swan, £4.99 & £3.50)

Reissue of Wolfe's books which were first published in 1968 and and 1975 respectively should easily grab a whole new generation of readers in the wake of the success of 'Bonfire of The Vanities'. His essays on then-contemporary 'culture' still make the content of 'Pump House Gang' irresistibly irreverent while his discourses on Modern Art in the 'Painted Word' remain the cleverest pinpricks of the attendant pretentions in existence.

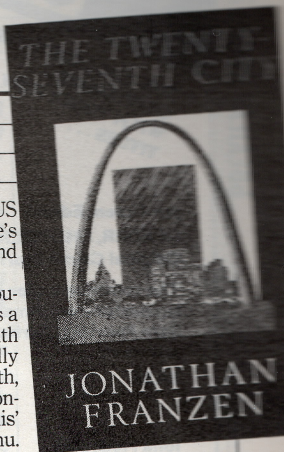
Elaine Feinstein: 'Mother's Girl' (Arena, £3.50)

As a young girl, obsessive Halina is sent from war-torn Budapest to stay with an English family until her adored father, Leo, arrives. At Cambridge in the '50s, Halina falls in love with Janos, an esteemed University lecturer and old associate of Leo, who, naturally disapproves of the couple's marriage. The girl's humiliations at her husband's hands and her slow discovery of her parent's true roles in the Nazi invasion form an absorbing and emotive story beautifully told.

'THE TWENTY SEVENTH CITY'

by Jonathan Franzen

Macmillan £13.95



A hugely ambitious first novel which in the US has been favourably compared with Wolfe's 'The Bonfire Of The Vanities' for its scope and satire.

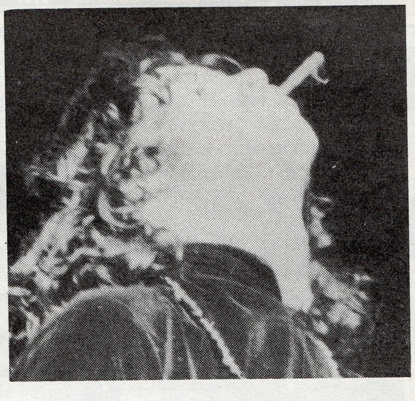
The twenty-seventh city of the title is St Louis, Missouri, mercilessly chosen by Franzen as a symbol of '80s America in rotten decline. With an arrogant sense of irony which occasionally threatens to get racially out of its depth, Franzen introduces a hit-team of political conspirators from Bombay, India, led by St Louis' new and first woman police chief, S Jammu. Jammu, a sort of Margaret Thatcher with a night stick, sets about seducing the city with her ruthless economic vision and stylishly brutal PR campaign. Jammu's only obstacle to a swift and total corruption of St Louis' finest citizens (via a complex system of electronic surveillance on their lives), is Martin Probst — the most boring, but the only uncorrupt, businessman in town. However, Jammu's sadistic efforts to destroy Probst's state of mind by targeting his wife and daughter prove strangely liberating for all concerned.

Franzen is a flawed, brattish, but immensely enjoyable novelist with a bad message for America.

Jane Solanas

'WILDERNESS: THE LOST WRITINGS OF JIM MORRISON'

Viking £9 .95



The grand highway
is
crowded
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please
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forget.
Wilderness.

Those among us who are old enough to remember the Benny Hill shows of the '60s, poor dears, must remember the slot that the old lech allocated to a straight-faced reading of contemporary pop song lyrics by himself and his lugubriously funny henchman Henry Maghee. The pubescent whining nonsensical words of even a Lennon/McCartney song treated as serious poetry could not fail to get heaps of laughs. Perhaps it was the lack of great commercial success at the time in this country of Morrison's The Doors, but one cannot remember fat Benny intoning lines of the kind reproduced in this book.

'Wilderness' is the accumulated writings and musings of that most gorgeous of dead pop stars, and it serves as something of a reminder that not so long ago the fickle heart of youth was moved to read and write poetry, and that Morrison himself was actually a step or two above his contemporaries in the field of serious writing. Covering as it does anything and everything that could be found in Morrison's handwriting there are examples of excrutiatingly embarrassing egotistical word-wanks as well as some genuine diamonds that reflect a man who realised the ridiculous immensity of being a pop star or cult hero. Man. In an introduction written by Morrison in preparation for the day when his poems would be published, he states 'Real poetry doesn't say anything, it just ticks off the possibilities.' He also goes on to say something about his poetry 'delivering people' but then the spirit of the age was optimism. This book will doubtless be bought in the main by Doors fans, but is a must for those fascinated by the path of warped narcissism that a man took which eventually led to deep cynicism and self-destruction. Some of the work stands up to repeated scrutiny and only a little of it could be used by Benny and Henry for cheap laughs. Love to hear them reading lines like 'As to the drowning man hoarse whisper invokes, on the edge, an arroyo Sangre De Christo. Violence in a time of plenty.' That would have them rolling in the aisles. Jim Morrison is alive and well and running guns in Nicaragua.

Mal Peachey

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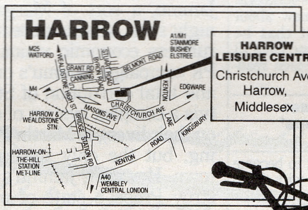

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BOOKS

'THE WAY WE DIE NOW'

by Charles Willeford

Gollancz £11.95

Crime writer Willeford's death means that this is the last we'll be getting of Miami police sergeant Hoke Moseley, his dentures and his menagerie of daughters and the live-in retired ex-partner with a baby, Ellita. As with the magnificent 'Sideswipe', the actual violence occupies a very small though unforgettable space in what had become a rounded life of the harried hero. Forbidden to shave, bereft of his teeth and identification, Hoke is dumped in the backwoods to investigate the disappearance of migrant workers. Meanwhile, his womenfolk decamp with a released murderer. His is an unhappy lot, what with his alimony payments, new regulations against smoking in the nick and a near-buggering from a brutal Mexican in a barn. Even the prospect of sex with a four foot nine Filippino woman is eroded by discussion. 'You want a slow hand job in shower? Hand job not the same as adultery.' 'No, thanks, Elena,' replied Hoke. 'If I wanted a hand job, I could do it myself. Women don't know how to do it right anyway.' There is a classic description of the process of domestic termite extermination, and the high mortality rate of illiterate burglars who fail to read the warnings. Not his best, but if you loved the other three you'll want it anyway.
Brian Case

'THE BRIDESMAID'

by Ruth Rendell

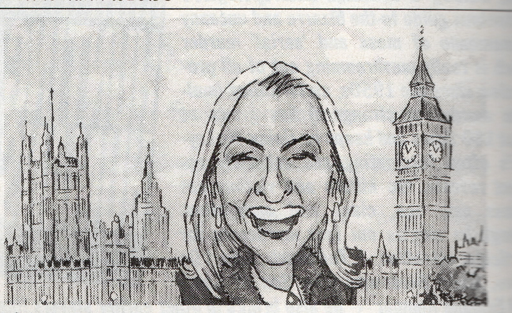
(Hutchinson, £11.95)

Any mention of death gives Philip Wardman the willies. At his sister's wedding he is captivated by Senta Pelham, an aspiring actress who doesn't wash very often and frequently lies in bed all day drinking wine and inhaling incense. When she eventually tells him that she has killed to prove her love for him Philip doesn't know whether or not to believe her. We don't. Rendell's latest psychodrama isn't so much about lust as about our limitless capacity for self-delusion. Philip doesn't fancy Senta in a straightforward way — sometimes she repels him — her initial attraction lies in her uncanny resemblance to a statue of Flora which his mother gives away to a suitor and which Philip later steals back. Although this central relationship is intriguing the real interest rests in the scrupulous depiction of the Wardmans' lower middle-class environment. Christine, the widowed mother, is well past her sell-by date but still, in her simple and kindly way, hopeful of finding another husband. Fee, the elder daughter, gets hitched to Darren. The names say it all. Cheryl, the younger daughter, is a loutish shoplifter. As for Philip, he's as prepossessing as a smelly dishcloth and a trainee interior designer to boot. Rendell doesn't condemn her characters, she examines the dirt beneath their fingernails and doesn't blink at horror. The closing stages are very nasty. Because of this you can almost forgive the complete lack of style.
Mark Sanderson

'MEMBERS ONLY'

by Frances Edmonds

William Heinemann £10.95



Writing jokey accounts of your husband's cricketing adventures when you have lived through them is one thing. Taking a year from a standing start to produce an account of a complicated institution like Parliament is something quite different, and it must be said that Mrs Edmonds doesn't really make it. Armed only with a lot of middle-of-the-road *Daily Mail* attitudes and some extremely dodgy jokes she wanders around the Mother of Parliaments and comes up with a series of familiar anecdotes and unastounding insights: being an ordinary MP is rather boring; Edwina Currie is interested in publicity; Terry Dicks and Geoffrey Dickens are known to members of the Press as 'rent-a-quotes'; Mrs Thatcher has gone too far and left-wing activists have bad manners. To be fair, Frances Edmonds gives us an impression of how Parliament works, and there are some genuinely clever phrases, but an overdose of common sense and reasonableness conspire to leave the reader gagging. As a book, this makes a very good Sunday paper article: that's where it should have stayed.
John Morrish

BOOKENDS INTERVIEW

CARIS DAVIS

THE BLACK VERSION Caris Davis ('just say I'm anywhere between 28 and 42') is a human anachronism, a tuned-in, turned-on, *OZ*-brained hippy-type of the kind you might have found in any student's union bar during the early '70s. Like, you know what I mean? These days that sort of hey-wow-man style is not so much far out, as just out.

I went to interview Caris on his sickbed, a grimy, crumpled landscape of empty cigarette-packets and tightly-packed ashtrays. Caris spends quite a lot of time in bed, whether he's sick or not. Shaking his hand I noticed that he was wearing a studded, black-leather mitten. Onan the barbarian, I mused, remembering that Caris once worked in a Soho sex-shop (he gave it up when he recognised a good friend among the browsing scumbags). 'Cigarette?' he whispered. Accepting the proffered Camel, I sat down and turned off the Dolby on my cassette-recorder before placing the machine next to his heavy-metal coiffure. What was a little more tape-hiss beside the boos that were awaiting Caris's first novel, 'Stealth'? But which edition? There are two — one black one, one white one. Might the critics at least like one version of 'the planet's first millenial novel'?

Not that Caris cared. He shook his hair in a vigorous denial that threatened to take my eye out. 'Fuck them,' he snarled, suddenly coming alive 'what do they know?'

I opened one of the 'interlocking volumes' and stared bleakly at the word-processed prose before enquiring gently of the author exactly what 'Stealth' was about.

'Tourette's syndrome, and identity paradox,' he tripped off (whatever he was tripping on I wanted a mouthful and quick), 'techno-voodoo in the big cities, adultery in the AIDS age, and the ontological nature of accelerated time.'

'Well, that takes care of the Jilly Cooper readership,' I quipped, and wondered how much Pseuds Corner were paying these days.

'Hey that's quite a sense of humour you have there,' croaked Caris. 'Like, I mean, it's really, you know, black.'

THE WHITE VERSION Caris Davis is an original. That his first novel, 'Stealth' (released as two volumes, one a black comedy, the other a tragic farce) should be released as a Penguin Original seems entirely apposite. The man is uniquely himself, a walking, rapping, finger-snapping Marvel-comic of a human being, who literally sees the world and the word through violet contact-lenses. This wild-looking, iconoclastic figure seems destined to be to the English novel what Stockhausen is to classical music. Conceived as a 'cerebral adventure', 'Stealth' is an attempt to convey a sense of the velocity of these pre-millenial times:

'I wanted to do something that gave people the sensation of fast change. To achieve that I decided to use the word-processor not just as a tool, but as a way of affecting the content of the book, to utilise the speed inherent in the machine itself, so that without being too prolix, I could give the reader the feeling of the speed that attends the end of the twentieth-century.' 'Stealth' is the ultimate Amstrad novel.

The story takes place in some dystopian metropolis of the future, and features Jack, a TV reporter with an identity crisis and a lover who collects poodles, and who is on the trail of a psycho-killer. There is also a collection of decidely unattractive misfits who make the Sex Pistols look like life members of the London Library. Enormously energetic (like Caris himself), and startlingly inventive, 'Stealth' is the speed-read (in both senses) of the year, a terrifying, chemically-induced nightmare that will press you back into your chair with the G-force of the author's prodigiously lexicographic imagination. God knows what this man dreams about.

I opened one of the 'interlocking volumes' and stared in awe at the word-processed prose before enquiring gently of Barnet's answer to William Burroughs how the reader should approach the book(s). 'You can read them sequentially or simultaneously,' he said. 'The reader controls the pace. That's why it's a bit of fun, an adventure.' He paused, shuddering. 'But the critics . . .'

'Fuck them,' I snarled, 'what do they know?'

Caris smiled. 'Hey, you know, like that's really white of you.'

Philip Kerr

'Stealth — The White Edition', 'Stealth — The Black Edition' are published by Penguin on April 27 at £4.99.

Philip Kerr is the author of 'March Violets', published by Viking at £11.95.

EVENTS

Kathy Acker talks about 'Young Lust' with Jeanette Winterson at the ICA, The Mall, SW1 (930 0493) Wed (19) 1pm £1.80 plus £1 day membership.

The Grooves of Change: Victorian Revolution and Reaction — readings from Dickens, Gaskell, Engels, Darwin and others in the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, SE1 (928 8800) Wed (19) 6.30pm £2.50/£1.50 concs.

Penelope Lively talks about her work at the Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's St, SW1 (408 0214) Wed (19) 6.30pm £1.50 including a glass of wine.

Green Book Fair features over 50 publishers exhibiting and selling their books plus a variety of readings and signings at Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Rd, SW3 (Enq: 582 6580) Thurs-Sat.

Heathcote Williams reads from and signs copies of 'Whale Nation' at the Green Book Fair (see above) Thurs 7pm.

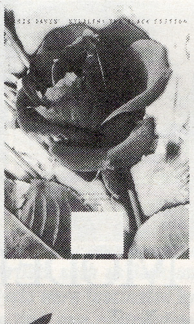
John May talks about 'The Greenpeace Story' at the Green Book Fair (see above) Fri 6pm.

Book Fair offers second-hand books for sale at 2 Denbigh Place, SW1 (828 3864) Sat 2-4.30pm.

Gilbert and George will sign copies of 'The Art of Gilbert and George' at Books Etc, 120 Charing Cross Rd, WC2 Mon 5-6pm.

Gianni Celati will discuss his writing and contemporary Italian literature at the Italian Institute, 39 Belgrave Square, SW1 Mon 6.30pm Free.

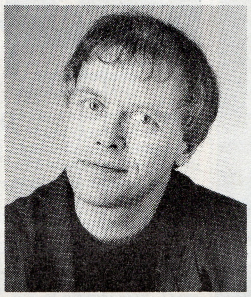
Green Ink: Writing and the Environment — Ben Elton and Maggie Gee talk to Blake Morrison about what fiction can do to raise our ecological consciousness at the ICA (see above for venue details) Wed (26) 7.30pm £2.60 plus £1 day membership.



PREVIEW

CABARET

Tirade secrets and the low-down on the stand-ups by Malcolm Hay.



MALCOLM HAY

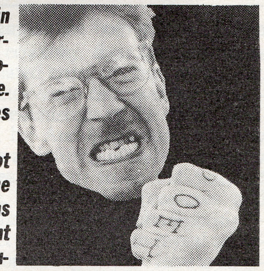
On John Hegley

On the front cover of John Hegley's latest collection of poems there's a line drawing of a figure nailed to a cross. The bloke's wearing glasses. He's looking mildly uncomfortable. Down below there's a dog, staring up, wondering what on earth is going on. The slim yellow volume contains 40 poems. It's very reasonably priced at two quid. Hegley's new book is called 'Can I Come Down Now Dad?'.

Several poems are to do with schooldays and family. Others are about individuals at odds with so-called normal life — as in 'Eddie Don't Like Furniture', or the story of Colin, an unemployed vandal who comes to terms with his affliction by getting a job as a demolition ball. But Hegley's major obsessions (witness the cover illustration) are 'optical accessories' and dogs. The two subjects are spectacularly combined in a short piece entitled 'My Doggie Don't Wear Glasses'. Telephone Hegley at home and the answerphone greets you with a chorus of excited barks followed by the bleep.

I was thrown when he turned up for our chat carrying a briefcase. It seemed strangely out of character for someone who's such an unusual and remarkable performer. Hegley's an all-rounder. He's a poet and songwriter, driven by a desire 'to make poetry exciting and enjoyable'. He's a musician with a magic touch on the mandolin. He's lead singer with that delightful, subtle trio John Hegley & The Popticians. And he's one half (Otiz Cannelloni is the other) of The Brown Paper Bag Brothers, who've discovered uses for paper bags that J Sainsbury never dreamed of. Last year Hegley won a Time Out Cabaret Award. The voting of the panel was unanimous. The only problem came with the wording. What do you call a man who seems to do everything? You call him a comedian. But it's wildly misleading if that's taken to mean that Hegley's simply another stand-up.

He started on the streets, armed with a sociology degree and some experience of working with 'delinquents'. After touring adventure playgrounds with Interaction, he was hired by Soapbox Theatre in the East End, and learnt the mandolin for a part as Julius Sneezer's slave in the epic 'Julius Sneezer and the Roaming Bath'. 'I worked in children's theatre for four years,' he says, 'before I did anything at all for adults.' Then there was busking. Hegley himself first appeared in cabaret at the Comedy Store in 1981: 'I performed whimsical songs with one-line introductions. I got away with it the first time. After that I was gonged off five times running.'



ANTHONY PILTON

There's little danger of that now (and not just because they've done away with the gong). Hegley's solo act is unique; whereas most comedians busily push all the right buttons to get laughs, Hegley creates a situation which in itself is fun. 'Cabaret is a good form, an intimate form,' he says. So he aims to engage in a playful dialogue with an audience. He prefers nights when he's appearing with performers he feels close to, rather than working as one act on a randomly assembled bill. For that reason he's set up the legendary 'Hey Bohemia!' shows which run every few weeks at the Red Rose Club, as well as the 'Lauderdale Lunchtime' shows for all the family at Waterlow Park in Highgate. What's lost when audiences, encouraged to admire mere slickness, demand the product and don't want the whole personality? 'In one word: joy.'

> *'I performed whimsical songs with one-line introductions. I got away with it the first time. After that I was gonged off five times running.'*

At the end of the month Hegley is taking a one-man show into the Bloomsbury Theatre for two nights. He'll be trying out a new double-act. With a large puppet. It's a dog. The dog's called Hermann Hessian. The show is called 'Can I Come Down Now Dad?'. Hegley will be reading from the little yellow book. When pressed, he admits that one of his favourites is 'The Briefcase'. The opening lines are familiar territory: 'From the very beginning I loved my glasses/the eye test made me feel important/I wanted to be colour blind as well'. Then we get on to the leather briefcase. It's hailed as 'a joyful absurdity'. Its bearer is confronted with the crude question, 'What have you got in the briefcase then, four-eyes?' 'POWER was the reply/the power of the human imagination'.

John Hegley appears solo at Punchline Comedy Club (Sat) and the Other Side of the Moon (Tue). He's with The Popticians at Lauderdale Lunchtime and Cast's Wood Green venue (both on Sun). 'Can I Come Down Now Dad?' is at the Bloomsbury Theatre on April 28 and 29.

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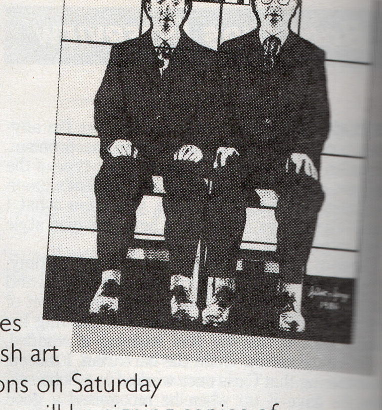

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PREVIEW

ART

New reviews edited by Sarah Kent

ROBERT MACDONALD

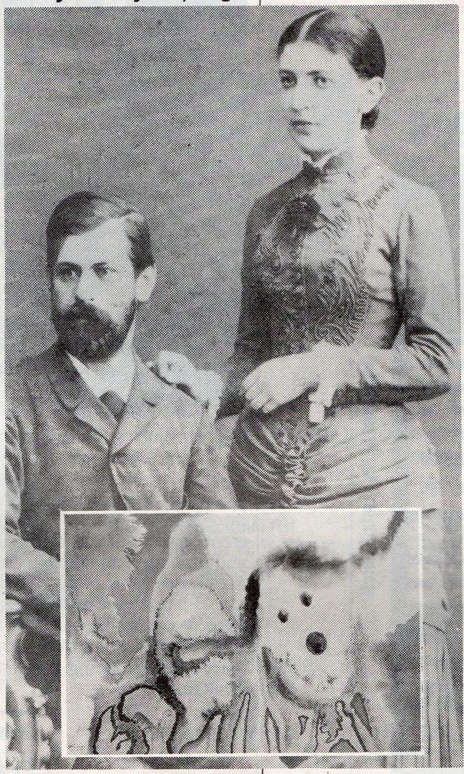
On Art And Analysis

Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, was inclined to take a reductive view of art and artists. He considered himself a scientist and suggested that artists turned to a world of fantasy because they were unable to face reality, unlike scientists who were compelled to see the world as it really is. Possibly there were other reasons for his disparagement of creative people: Freud's wife Martha had two other admirers before her marriage. One was an artist and the other a composer and Freud was frankly jealous of their special talents. 'I think there is a general enmity between artists and those engaged in the details of scientific work,' he once wrote. 'We know that they possess in their art a master key to open with ease all female hearts, whereas we stand helpless at the strange design of the lock and have first to torment ourselves to discover a suitable key to it.' That sounds suspiciously Freudian and indicates that the great patriarch saw male artists as dangerous rivals. Unconsciously, he neutralised the danger by portraying artistic activity as a manifestation of neurosis.

This aspect of Freudian dogma was to be challenged by Carl Gustav Jung, Freud's rebellious disciple, and by other explorers who followed the Viennese doctor into the tangled labyrinths of the mind. Jung saw how intimately interconnected were human myths and folk-tales, religious experience and artistic activity, and he traced the roots of this connection down to that deeper part of the mind he termed the collective unconscious. From these depths arise archetypal forces which shape our destiny, he believed. Because of his perceptive approach to myth and symbol, Jung's writings have had a profound influence on modern artists. But Freud was also one of the great father figures of modern art, notwithstanding his ambivalent feelings about artists. Others had talked about its existence before, but his was the first analysis of the workings of the unconscious, and his discoveries fascinated the artists and poets who became known as the surrealists. They too were drawn to that great inner lake of irrational impulses, hidden desires and forgotten memories. Reacting against the mad sort of reason which had produced the First World War, they saw the illogical as a creative force for revolutionary change. Artists such as Magritte, Ernst, Delvaux and Dali became dedicated explorers of dream imagery. The surrealists experimented too with techniques of writing and painting designed to bypass the rational mind and to tap the contents of the unconscious. André Masson and other painters gave themselves over to 'automatism' and abandoned conscious control of their art, allowing their hands to produce marks unthinkingly, discovering strangely magical creatures in the random results. Fleeing to New York when the Nazis invaded France, the surrealists were to encourage a new generation of American abstract expressionists to take the sometimes fatal plunge into the unconscious.

Throughout all this activity there was a two-way traffic between art and psychoanalysis. Artists such as Jackson Pollock spent time in Jungian analysis. Psychoanalysts were fascinated by the explorations of the artists. Some of them made their own contribution to Surrealism. In Britain in 1939 a Freudian analyst, Dr Grace Pailthorpe, published an article on 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' in which she described her experiments with automatic drawing and painting to support psychological investigations. With her collaborator, Reuben Mednikoff, a young commercial artist, she was to enter surrealist circles in Britain and to become an exhibitor in surrealist shows. She continued to produce extraordinarily free images until just before her death in 1971, at the grand age of 88. Over 30 of her watercolours are on show at Birch & Conran — works which reveal that even in her old age she had fairy-tale monsters and fantastic landscapes lurking just below the surface of her mind. No doubt we all do, but perhaps only artists and psychoanalysts possess what Freud would have described as the master key to unlock this hidden area, of the mind if not of the heart.

Grace Pailthorpe's Works on Paper are at Birch & Conran until May 5.



CRITIC'S CHOICE

1. John Bellany
(Fischer Fine Art)

Bellany's life was saved by a major operation recently and his latest paintings deal with his hospital brush with death, and express anxiety, pain, hope.

2. Photography Now
(V & A)

This celebrates the 150th anniversary of the invention of photography. Those committed to the notion that photography records the real will be startled by the experimental work on view.

3. Royal Treasures of Sweden 1550-1700
(Royal Academy)

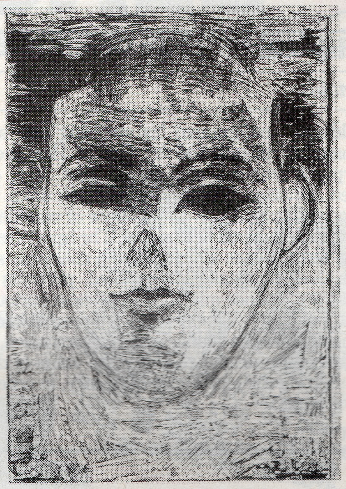
Connoisseurs of royal treasure will enjoy this successful blend of history and art, which displays works from Sweden's Great Age including a salt cellar by Rubens.

4. Camouflage
(Imperial War Museum)

This show explores cultural camouflage along with material from the WW1 collection.

5. Alighiero A Boetti
(Edward Totah/Laure Genillard)

Boetti was associated with Italy's Art Povera group in the 1960s and nowadays he works indirectly, using contributors in Europe and Afghanistan to collaborate with him on drawings and embroideries which present unusual juxtapositions of ideas and techniques. At Laure Genillard only until April 22.



Jim Dine

Waddington Galleries

Jim Dine was one of the seminal figures of Pop Art in the early '60s, and his work nowadays displays the great strengths and the weaknesses of the American artistic superstar. Few other creative figures can compare with him in range of output and activity. This show is divided into two parts — new paintings and sculpture, and new graphic work. His woodcuts are heroic in scale and sensitive in their execution, some designed as monumental wall displays. They deal with archetypal images. As an artist he has long transcended the superficiality of Pop. Trees of life are counterpointed by the symbols of fate and death and a fascination with antiquity is revealed. The past seems a metaphor for what is mysterious and beyond our reach, and in his paintings he presents gateways guarded by the traditional demons. Dine's creative vitality and the courage of his inventiveness is phenomenal, his subject matter is profound, but I felt that energy, scale, skill and technical versatility are a distraction at times from the exploration of inner meaning.

Robert Macdonald

David Leapman/Roy Voss

Curwen Gallery

These young painters are both gripped with a strong sense of economy, their large canvases bare but for isolated areas of creative activity. Leapman decorates some canvases with a network of marks reminiscent of the desert landscapes outlined by André Masson. In a few instances there is an infilling of paint but mostly the sketchy lines are left as an indication of what might be. He hints at presences and the imagery leans towards metamorphosis — boxes sprout feet and open up to reveal an enclosed head, or something similar. Here is an interesting imagination shrouded by a tantalising reticence. Voss punctuates his canvases with small areas sewn with woollen thread or extruding plaster shapes of baby's socks, tiny shoes, a pyjama-top — all relics evoking the presence of the humans who once occupied these garments. The plaster pyjama-top shares its picture space with a crudely woven bedhead shape, these two images touching like a *haiku* on a world of feelings.

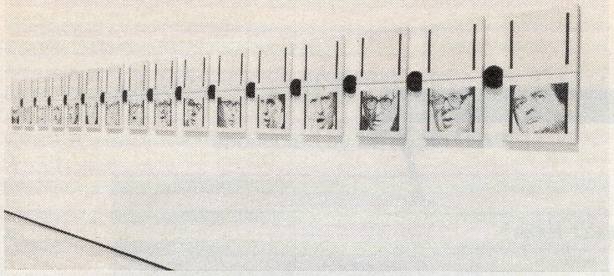
Robert Macdonald

Lucy Jones

Angela Flowers Gallery

Lucy Jones is a small person who paints big pictures and the forceful expressionism of her painting is the more remarkable bearing in mind her lifelong battle with cerebral palsy. The paralysis which attacked her body is nowhere apparent in her pictures, which flow with unrestrained energy — as though in her brushwork the artist is determined to achieve the strength and decisiveness denied her physically. Her London landscapes are revelations of singing fauve colour, with an emphasis on vivid purples and yellows. Their subjects are the Thames, the Embankment and the river bridges, and they deal with space in a forceful, dramatic way — structures learned from the Japanese via Van Gogh. Her self-portraits have an intensity which is startling — the urgent stare of the eyes reinforcing the emotional power of thickly stirred paint and strong colour.

Robert Macdonald



Gerald Hemsworth

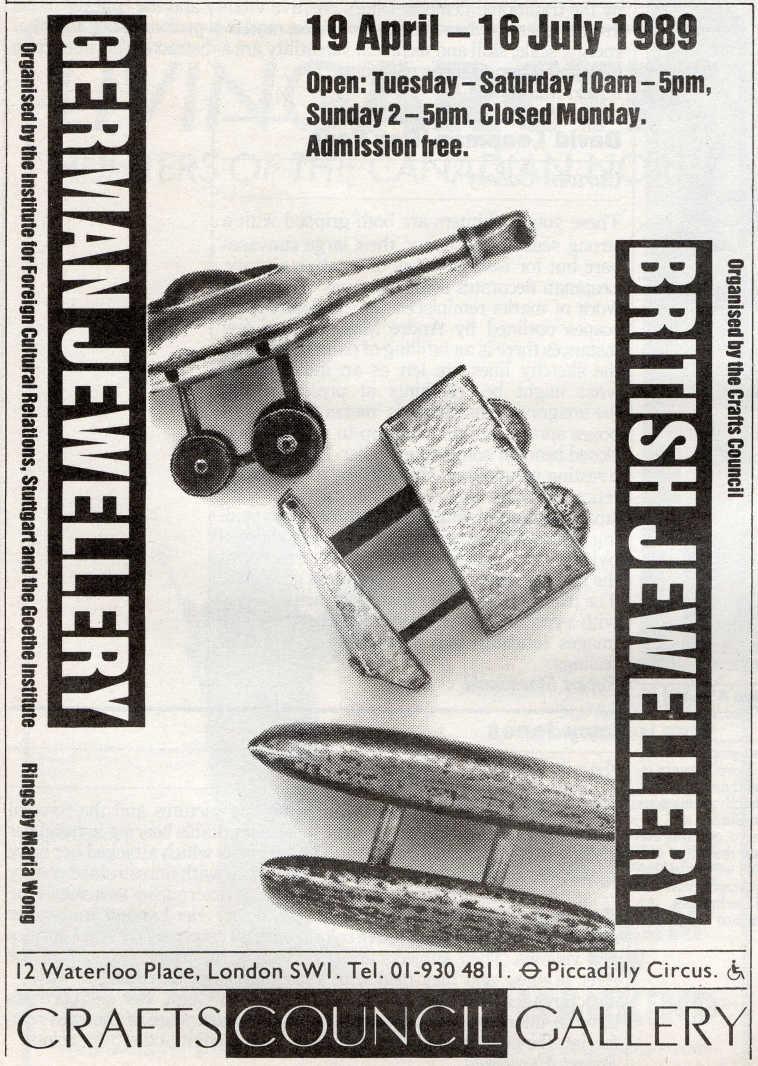
Anthony Reynolds

Anthony Reynolds has inaugurated his stunning new space in Dering Street with a painting installation by Gerald Hemsworth. 'Financial Times' is a polyptych ranged across the longest wall, comprising 16 vertically doubled canvases linked by small black discs. Each canvas is flat matt pink, and this, together with the sense of unfolded pages, makes a visual play on the eponymous newspaper. The upper elements are empty save for black vertical lines which define a columnar space, while below, Hemsworth has painstakingly painted portraits of the entire contingent of post-war finance ministers. The most curious thing is their disturbing facial similarity. Hemsworth's abiding concerns have been with the relationship between reality and representation, and the use of repetition to both undermine and reinforce the value of difference. Here, he seems to be asserting the uniformity of history, in order to disrupt the authority of the present.
Kate Bush

José Maria Sicilia

Runkel-Hue-Williams

José Maria Sicilia — a Spanish painter currently based in Paris and Majorca — is showing delicately textured abstract works on paper in this opulent West End space. Rough-cut surfaces are coated with alternating layers of cracked wax and areas of saturated pigment, then dusted off with a crust of fine white powder. In their evocation of crumbling masonry, colonised by fungal blooms and sulphurous lichens, these works are overwhelmingly picturesque. Some have added interest: coloured lozenges, inchoate black forms disappearing off the paper edge, or emblematic groups of African implements, daubed over the patinated surface. Sicilia's predilection for organic and telluric effects situates him in relation to Spanish forebears, Miro ánd Tapies, but with this particular aesthetic seems to run onto rather arid ground.
Kate Bush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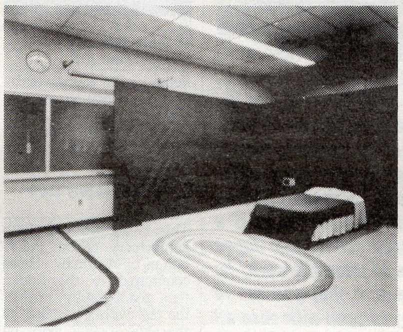


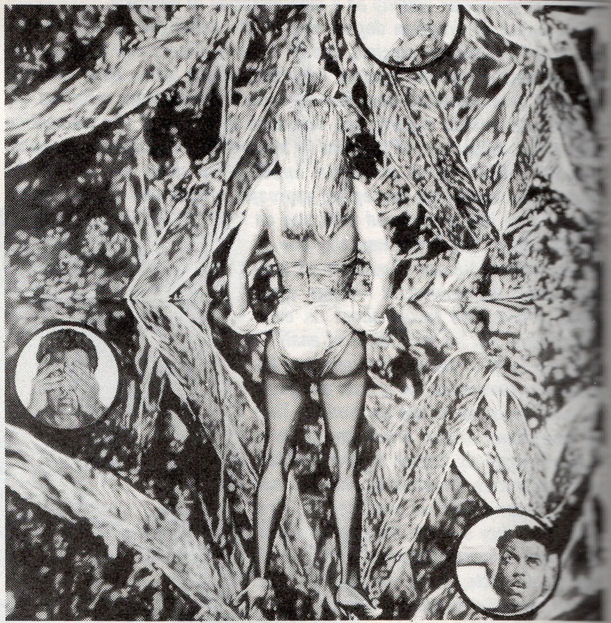
'Power Plays'

Canada House

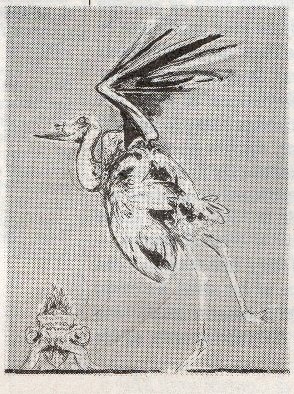
'Power Plays' presents a broad and exciting range of contemporary Canadian photography. All seven artists investigate aspects of power, its manifestations in both public and private arenas, as well as its operation through photographic practice itself. Stylistically, the work ranges from the accessible agit-prop of Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge's photo-essay 'No Immediate Threat' (an exploration of the domestic and working lives of nuclear power workers), through Pierre Guimond's Dadaist montages satirising consumer excess, to the cool but quirky presentation of Lynne Cohen's corporate and institutional interiors. Miklos Legrady's series 'I Want to Bite the Hand That Feeds Me' charts psycho-erotic territory with all the panache of a B-movie. Burning vipers, decapitated brides and grooms, vampire fangs and a busty mermaid play out low-budget scenarios amid lurid, Technicolor sets. Donigan Cumming photographs disturbed and destitute people in squalid surroundings.
Kate Bush

Mixed Show

Anthony Reynolds



There is much to be savoured in this mixed show of gallery artists. Anthony Wilson's photo-piece 'that which appears is good, that which is good appears' is a neat exercise in moral ambiguity. In a bank vault, surrounded by a cache of drugs, a group of uniformed men are surprised by unseen intruders: but who are the criminals? This image is repeated around a cross shape, to make a visual pun on cross-reading or misinterpretation, and ultimately to address the slippery nature of the image. Alain Miller juxtaposes icons of white female sexuality with his own image, combating with irony the more pernicious myths about black male sexuality. In a large monochrome painting, a bunny girl is set against luxuriant foliage while Miller's self-portrait appears in three 'thought bubbles' around her, each pose parodying the gestures of the proverbial Wise Monkey.
Kate Bush



Graham Sutherland OM

Redfern Gallery

Among all his other activities Graham Sutherland was a tireless and inventive printmaker, and this exhibition traces his graphic work from the early etchings and drypoints of the 1920s to aquatints made shortly before his death in 1980. The early work owes much to the dark rural romanticism of artists such as Samuel Palmer and even Paul Nash, but he moved from rhythm-filled landscapes to a bolder focus on individual creatures. There is a curious coldness in his imagery. His analysis of living form is pitiless and unsentimental. Winston Churchill's widow destroyed Sutherland's portrait of her husband. One cannot condone such vandalism, but how would the rest of us react when scrutinised by such an eye?
Robert Macdonald

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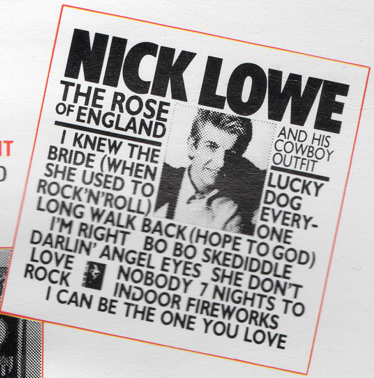
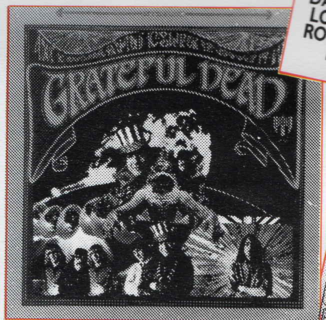

NICK LOWE
THE ROSE OF ENGLAND
AND HIS COWBOY OUTFIT
I KNEW THE BRIDE (WHEN SHE USED TO ROCK'N'ROLL)
LUCKY DOG
EVERYONE
LONG WALK BACK (HOPE TO GOD) I'M RIGHT
BO BO SKEDIDDLE
DARLIN' ANGEL EYES
SHE DON'T LOVE
ROCK
NOBODY
7 NIGHTS TO
INDOOR FIREWORKS
I CAN BE THE ONE YOU LOVE

NICK LOWE AND HIS COWBOY OUTFIT
THE ROSE OF ENGLAND

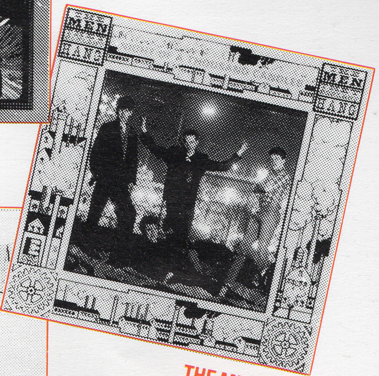
JOHN CALE
VINTAGE VIOLENCE


GRATEFUL DEAD

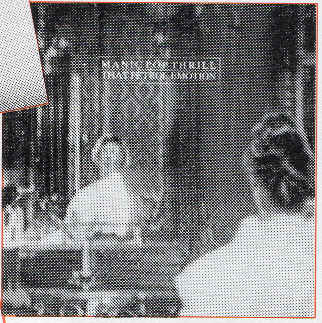
GRATEFUL DEAD

BYRDS
Younger Than Yesterday

THE BYRDS
YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY



THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG
NIGHT OF A THOUSAND CANDLES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THAT PETROL EMOTION
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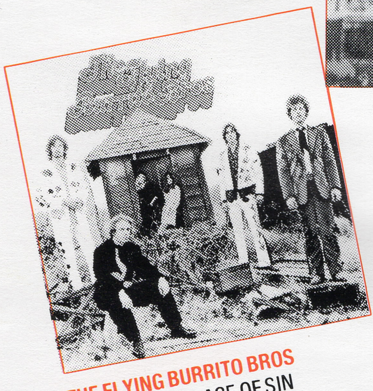

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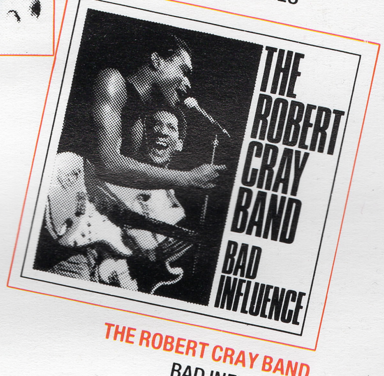
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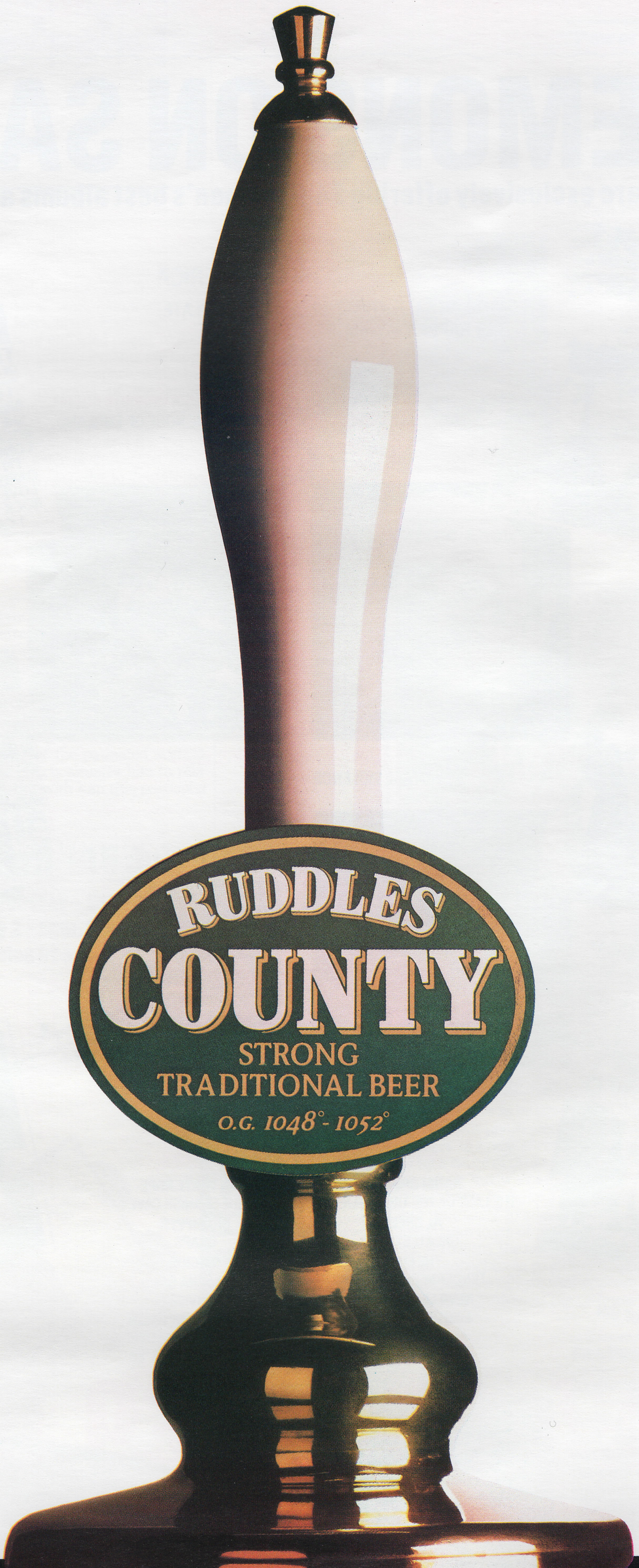
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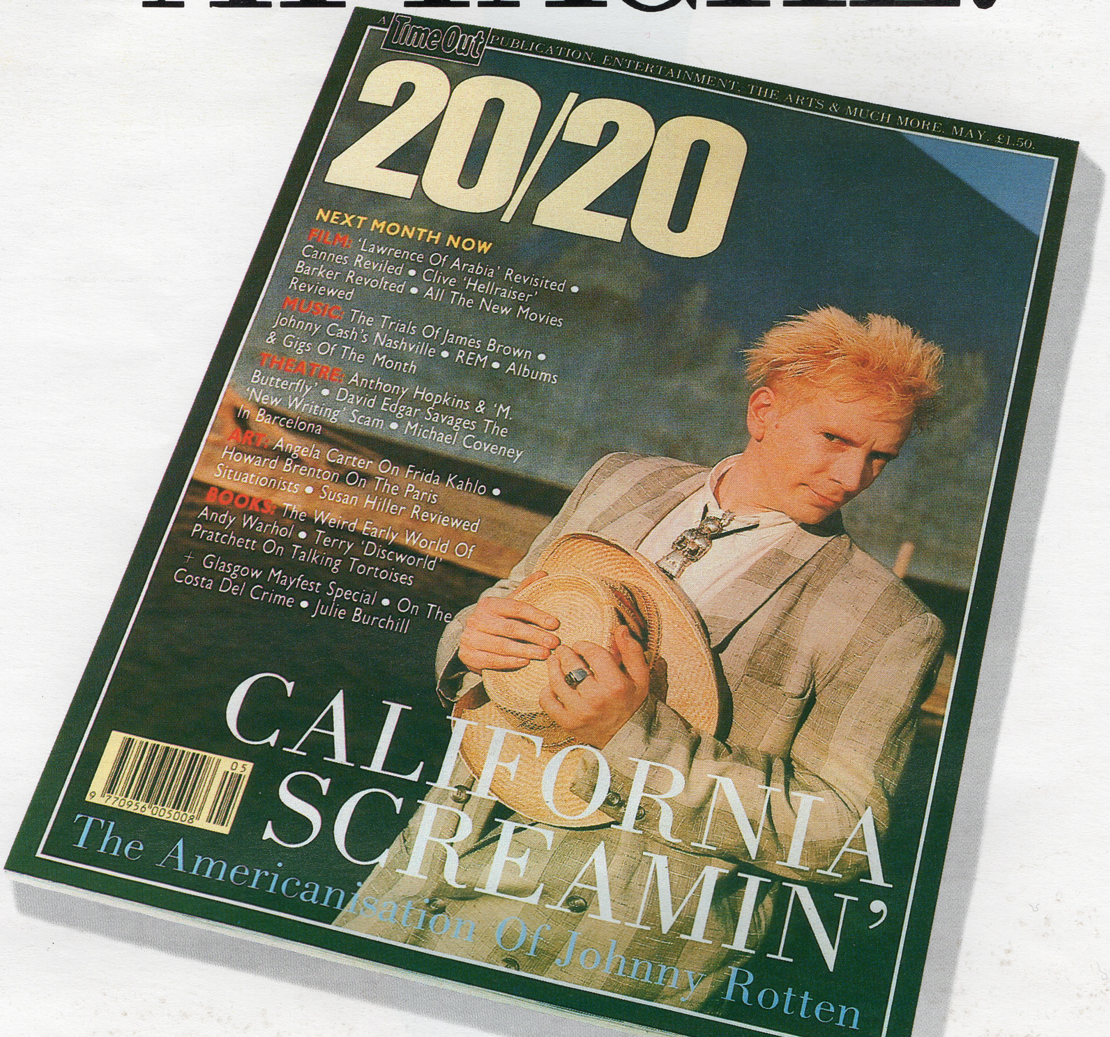

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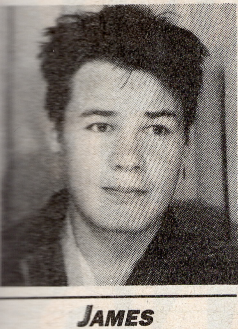
PREVIEW

THEATRE

From the gaudiest musical to the rarest minimalism. Plus Cues, Critics' Choice and Openings of the Week.

Edited by Jane Edwardes



JAMES CHRISTOPHER

On The Verge

'On the Verge or the Geography of Learning', by American playwright Eric Overmyer, is to have its London première at the Lilian Baylis this week courtesy of Free Fall Productions, a company founded last year by Paola Dionisotti, Juliet Stevenson and Anna Furse.

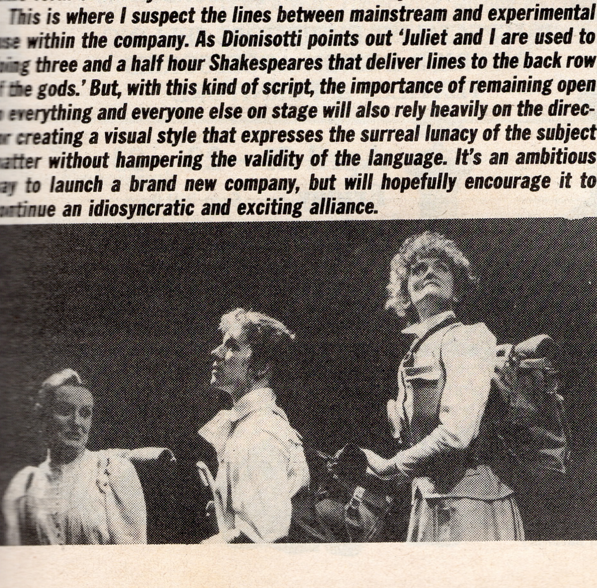
The play is a heady mix of theatrical talent but the most intriguing aspect, apart from Overmyer's extremely weird script, is the involvement of the director Furse, whose previous work cuts across the grain of the classical input one expects from the likes of Dionisotti and Stevenson. It's a collaboration that fuses the 'mainstream' to the 'experimental' and, from its reception in Birmingham (where the show had its British première), it works extremely well.

Dionisotti and Furse met in 1986 when working on Deborah Levy's 'Heresies', part of the RSC's Women's Project which Juliet Stevenson helped set up. So with respect to roots and aims, Free Fall were always going to venture towards feminist work — but without the security or protection afforded by a big company. This in turn has generated a certain amount of financial insecurity and doubtless some long term worries (hence Free Fall), but there's little mistaking the sense of adventure, teamwork and graft that the whole company has put in to make it work; endeavours that bubble over in Overmyer's script.

On the Verge is, on one level, a tribute to that extraordinary breed of Victorian women who fought against the constraints that their time placed on them. 'In a nutshell,' explains Furse, 'it's about a team of individuals: three 19th century women travellers who decide to travel without porters into terra incognito, hit a timewarp and land in '50s America where they try to sort themselves out. It's a journey into the future — what someone described as a feminist "Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy" — and a journey into culture and language. How they discover that they're travelling into the future is that words come into their mouths that they don't understand. They begin literally to speak in tongues when they bump into things like '50s slang and cream cheese; and the comic mileage in the play arises from the consequent breakdown of communications. Overmeyer is, in fact, examining the richness of the American language and what happens to the link between consciousness and society when the points of reference have been distorted.'

By subverting the concepts of 'place', 'time' and ultimately language, Overmyer creates a strange journey into the theatre of the imagination; a journey that tumbles our intrepid explorers into middle America, egg whisks, brand names and loofahs. There are precious few living American playwrights who write in, as Paola puts it, 'this crafted, high theatrical style' and get away with a plot that in Stevenson's words is 'wildly eccentric with totally absurd scenarios'. As she explains: 'Overmyer loves language and has such a facility for it that his lines are like really luscious jungle plants: they're so convoluted, green and juicy they're fantastic to have in the mouth, but on the other hand they can sound very twee and fey; language for language's sake is extremely dodgy, and has to be rooted in some form of reality and we've had to work bloody hard on that'.

This is where I suspect the lines between mainstream and experimental fuse within the company. As Dionisotti points out 'Juliet and I are used to doing three and a half hour Shakespeares that deliver lines to the back row of the gods.' But, with this kind of script, the importance of remaining open to everything and everyone else on stage will also rely heavily on the director creating a visual style that expresses the surreal lunacy of the subject matter without hampering the validity of the language. It's an ambitious way to launch a brand new company, but will hopefully encourage it to continue an idiosyncratic and exciting alliance.



CRITICS' CHOICE

1. 'The Way South'
Bush

Jacqueline Holborough's penetrating drama about the relationship of two women in a high security prison in the north east.

2. 'Ivanov'
Strand

Felicity Kendal puts in an exquisite performance as a woman dying without benefit of her Jewish faith, berated and despised by Alan Bates as the eponymous hero.

3. 'The Wicked World of Bel Ami'
Theatre Royal, Stratford East

Ken Hill produces another stunning musical in the tradition of Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop style.

4. 'Beirut'
Boulevard

Alan Bowne's fraught, powerful and erotic drama.

5. 'Icecream'
Royal Court

Caryl Churchill's compelling, poetic collage condemning corruption on both sides of the Atlantic.

ALASTAIR MUIR

'Ivanov'

Strand

Written both as an attack on the prevailing mood of navel-watching on the Russian stage and as a symbolic attack on the plight of the intellectual faced with bureaucracy and mediocrity, 'Ivanov' is beset by one huge problem: Chekhov's hero. A landowner plunged into almost perpetual self-obsession, despair, self-dramatisation, and disgust is a pretty unappealing prospect for an evening out. Alan Bates is a very good actor when it comes to archness and sarcasm (cf 'Otherwise Engaged', 'Butley', 'An Englishman Abroad' etc); but when he affects ennui and pathos, the effect is a trifle less successful, inclining towards a vapid, nay torpid, monotony of effect which, while occasionally fitting, hardly redeems the loafer in the way that Chekhov thought both necessary and possible. For the rest, Elijah Moshinsky's direction of Ronald Harwood's adaptation (or rather 'version') is brisk enough. Though some of the smaller parts are filled by duffers, the likes of Peter Bayliss, Frank Thornton, and, most of all, Nicky Henson as the bumptious estate manager Borkin, help to pass the time on Mark Thompson's splendid all-purpose set of painted board and builder's canvas complete with celestial peep-hole up top. Most memorable of all is the exquisite performance of Felicity Kendal as Anna Petrovna: a woman dying without the benefit of her Jewish faith, berated and despised by her husband, suffering without complaint. After her untimely departure and well before Ivanov puts us all out of our misery, this superbly wrought characterisation is sorely missed. At least he's a better shot than Uncle Vanya.

Steve Grant

'The Phantom Violin'

Queen Elizabeth Hall

Théâtre de Complicité, in tandem with the inspired chamber group Chameleon, pull off yet another implausible coup with this well crafted contribution to highbrow nonsense. Poaching freely from the works of the literary and musical masters of the nineteenth century — Beethoven to Wordsworth and back again — Complicité stitch together a tale of love and infatuation that owes an enormous amount to the compositional skills of Gerard McBurney and the clinical virtuosity of Elisabeth Perry on the violin. The action unfolds at a masked ball in a country house where two unhappy lovers fall obsessively in love with each other without realising each other's identity. 'He' (Eric Mallet) is charmed by her nightingale tones (supplied beautifully by Linda Russell) and 'She' (Annabel Arden), by the haunting strains of Perry's violin. A frantic and bizarre chase ensues, staged in the manner of an old black and white film where the mimetic antics of the lovers are counterpointed by passages of skillful operatics, stilted ironic exchanges and a fascinating lack of props. But however much one can appreciate Complicité's mastery for teasing established dramatic conventions, one senses they're too polite, too chic and too damned erudite to grab them by the balls. In this respect they will forever charm their audiences rather than move them.

James Christopher

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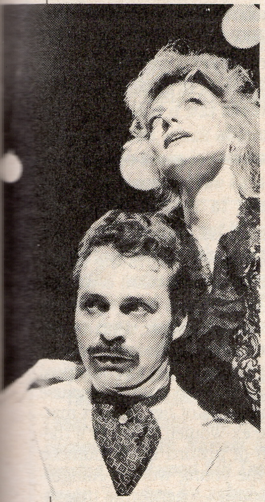
'Low Level Panic'

Lyric Studio, Hammersmith

Lucy Weller's bathroom set is a confessional for three women whose views of the world are almost entirely concerned with how men see them. It's classic fly-on-the-wall stuff with a dated but endearing 'Play For Today' feel engendered by the full-frontal tactics of director Nancy Meckler. The prodution is dominated by the overweight and terrifyingly honest Jo (admirably crafted by Caroline Quentin) whose desire to escape to a fantasy world concocted of porn and television soaps is a source of some wonderful comedy. But her sexual ambitions are terminally snarled by such world-shattering worries as having 'bunions and an unattractive clitoris' and an awful habit of 'guffawing' at parties. Celia (Alaine Hickmott) has no such trouble since she found the perfect eyeliner, and proceeds to stomp flat-footedly over her flatmate's ego with an exquisite lack of sensitivity. The main vehicle for Clare McIntyre's satiric exploration of sexual myths is carried by the guilt-strapped character of Mary (Lorraine Brunning) whose fear of genuine contact is real and chilling enough but whose didactic rants are sometimes too laboured and abrupt to be entirely convincing. Nevertheless, a thoroughly enjoyable slice of theatre with more than its fair share of sharp humour.

James Christopher



'The Wicked World of Bel Ami'

Theatre Royal, Stratford East

The most delightful thing about Ken Hill's glorious adaptation of Guy De Maupassant's novel is that the spirit of Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop seems still to be alive. Set in the Paris of the *belle époque* and faithfully retelling Maupassant's story of the rise and rise of Georges Duroy, Hill makes excellent use of 20 Offenbach songs to carry the narrative so jauntily that the evening might even be retitled 'Oh What a Lovely Whore'. When Duroy (a fine performance from Haluk Bilginer) returns to Paris from fighting abroad he soon discovers he's good for nothing except bedding the opposite sex. Since most of the nation's business in 1880's Paris was conducted from the bedchamber he soon earns the name of 'Bel Ami'. The added ingredient to this standard tale of sexual dalliance is that Duroy, when not in bed makes his career in the rapidly expanding 'popular press' which gives this production that delicious satirical bite for which Stratford East can be relied upon at least once or twice a year. The staging, singing and performances are all excellent and if you're looking for an good romp in the East End of London I can recommend this without reservation.

Paul Arnott

'Cage'

The Finborough

Houdini desired to effect the ultimate escape: from the mortal to the spiritual world and back again. For in heaven was a mother he had sanctified; on earth a spiritualism and medium-obsessed public, who needed to be finally shown whether it was possible to return from the dead: something Houdini doubted. Directed by the play's author Lyall Watson, this one-man-show features Mike McCormack (the theatre's Artistic Director) who had an earlier career as an escapologist and is therefore ideally suited to the role. He frees himself from a straight-jacket, massive water-filled milk-churn with padlocked-down lid, and a locked-up trunk, with wonderful overblown circus dramatics. But the trickery is at best a show within a show and sometimes worse — a complete distraction from the exploration of Houdini and his America, where fake fakirs were abundant and faithhealers celebrities. Lacking a clearer understanding of the age, McCormack's escapes become mere Paul-Daniels-style chicanery and his powerful speeches are dissipated.

Andrew Tuck

CUES

Bugger the box. Now's your chance to vent your spleen on the subject of television. Ken Campbell chairs a *Time Out* Talk entitled 'Arguments For The Elimination of TV' at 6pm at the Cottesloe. The first ten fortunate fans of this periodical to arrive at the NT Box Office on Friday (open from 10am) clutching a copy of the current issue (974), will receive, at no cost to themselves or their families, one pair of tickets each to the said debate.

***Time Out* supports a charity performance of 'On The Verge' at 7.45pm Thursday in the Lilian Baylis Theatre. Proceeds go to the Margaret Mee Amazon Trust, a fund set up to preserve her paintings of the flora and fauna of the Amazonian Rain-Forests. Every little helps.**

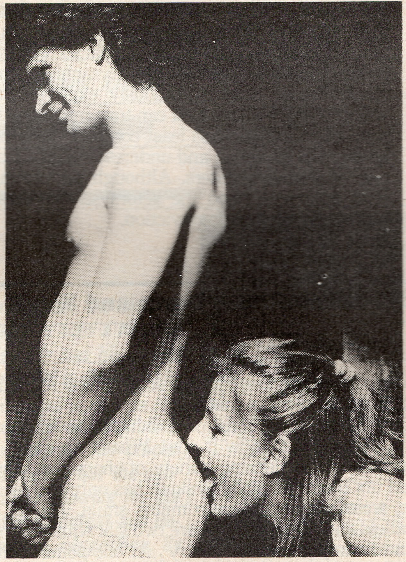
For aficionados of decent coffee-table literature, Ronnie Mulryne and Margaret Shewring have painstakingly compiled 'This Golden Round', a colourful and comprehensive history of the RSC at work in the Swan Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon. It's a fascinating study of how productions over the last three years have been stitched together, warts and all, with some notable contributions from Trevor Nunn, Jeremy Irons, Imogen Stubbs, Brian Cox, Antony Sher, Fiona Shaw, and Simon Russell Beale, amongst others. It's available in paperback at £7.95 and in hardback at £13.95 from most main booksellers, or direct from Mulryne and Shewring Ltd, 30 Avenue Road, Stratford-Upon-Avon, CV37 6UN.

Judith Cook's rather precious look at 16 leading directors in Britain today, 'Directors' Theatre', is (with the exceptions of Philip Hedley and Alan Ayckbourn) a depressingly classical selection. With the West End groaning under a morass of Shakespeare, the last thing one needs is everyone's reasons for doing it. 'Directors' Theatre' is published by Hodder and Stoughton (£6.95).

'Beirut'

Boulevard Theatre

The left buttock of a naked actor is branded with the red letter P for 'Positive'. Alan Bowne's marvellous play about sexual love is a fraught, emotional dialogue between lovers, in which the bare, unshaven man's girlfriend tries to explain that her desire for carnal knowledge and yearning to be with him is greater than the fear of contamination. The play brilliantly generates a sense of sultry heat, disease, and festering decay in a world quarantined from the safe, uninfected part of town, where sex is illegal and babies are born in petri dishes. It's known as 'Beirut' because it's a terrible place to be and a mad place to go. The language is the poetry of the underworld and often inspires irresistible mirth: 'You've got your head up your cunt you rat bastard.' If it has a fault, it is that the actors are just occasionally ill at ease with the expletives: they need to roughen their voices a little; be less 'actorish'. This is a powerful erotic drama, celebrating sex. Mind you, at the Boulevard there's just a chance I got the wrong theatre. But no: there was no bouncer. Hit.



Rick Jones

'Icecream'

Royal Court

Caryl Churchill has written a compelling little piece neatly divided into 20 scenes set 10 apiece in the UK and the USA. The scenes are short and poetic, and watching them is like an early morning dream into which one is repeatedly drawn before getting up. The fragmented tale she has to tell is of a middle-aged American couple, who in their determination to find their historical roots embrace Phil and Jaq, a seedy pair in their twenties living in East London, through whom they become involved in two comic murders. The first involves the disposal of a corpse in Epping forest; the second happens high on a cliff-top overlooking the Oregon Trail. What Churchill has written is a small-scale amorality play, in which civilisation on both sides of the Atlantic is so screwed up through religion, business, psychoanalysis or sheer paucity of thought that the only way forward is out. The challenge for Max Stafford Clark was to find a theatrical language through which the meaning of this delicate play could be conveyed. Unfortunately, although his cast is an excellently performed collection of comic caricatures, his direction makes the piece look like a collection of TV scenes seeking not an audience but a camera. In the end, 'Icecream' looks like a collection of pearls from Ms Churchill's notebook for which Stafford Clark has not yet discovered an appropriate string.

Paul Arnott